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INDIAN EROTICS OF THE OLDEST PERIOD

IVO FIŠER

UNIVERSITA KARLOVA PRAHA 1966

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UNIVERSITA KARLOVA—PRAHA 1966

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PREFACE

Erotics occupies a prominent place in the varied pattern of ancient Indian society. Erotic themes and ideas permeate Indian literary production to a considerable extent. They are quite conspicuous in Indian religion, too. The theory of secular erotics, which assumed a definite shape in the classical period of Indian antiquity, is a remarkable achievement without parallel in the annals of cultural history. Nowhere else do we come across such an elaborate system of learning that dwells on the most intimate phenomena of sexual life in all earnest and with impassive scholarly zest. Besides, the canon of erotics never became a dead letter and, with the exception of the late period of decadence, cannot be looked upon as a mere intellectual play on words. In fact, we are unable to appreciate even the best known classical poets, who were never suspected of any licence, unless we acquire at least a working knowledge of the basic tenets of erotics. To study the tantric cults of late medieval Hinduism and Buddhism, without a good understanding of erotical principles, is unthinkable.

Thus, without drawing any premature conclusions as to its practical value, we have to acknowledge the existence of ancient Indian erotics as an important factor stimulating some of the basic traits of social and cultural evolution in ancient India.

It is reasonable, therefore, to expect that these facts would be adequately reflected in current Indological studies. The truth, however, is different. Whereas any imaginable feature of the Indian cultural scene has been examined again and again in a vast number of learned books and papers that would fill up a library of many rooms, a modest shelf could easily accomodate the responsible expositions of ancient Indian sexual life.

The lack of interest in a serious study of ancient Indian erotics, no matter whether frank or pretended, reveals a remarkable psychological feature which, unfortunately, cannot be discussed in detail here. Suffice to say that the Victorian Mind, as a complex of social taboos imposed on the sexual sphere, is a term applicable to a much wider area than the British Isles of the last century! There are still many among us who prefer to

discuss such palatable topics with gusto in strict privacy while assuming a mildly amused dignity or politely remote embarrassment in public.

But even those who are free from prejudices, and those, I regret to say, still constitute a minority, are mostly reluctant to recognize the study of erotics as a discipline in its own right. There are, perhaps, two main reasons for their suspicions. First, they are of a purely personal character. Erotics is a field where every one of us (especially men) is most vulnerable. Sexual life is not a matter of conviction, but a deep and sometimes painful experience. A pious scholar can achieve excellent results in a scientific discipline which openly contradicts his religious views. But a man suffering from a sexual complex, be it of a physical or psychical origin, will certainly not fail to raise his voice in protest against erotics being brought out into the open. He will resent an impartial judgement out of an unconscious fear or misgivings, not shame! Anyone who intends to deal with erotics will encounter tough resistance from those people whose mind is excessively occupied with sex, but who are content to live in their own shadow.

Secondly, the lack of readiness to study Indian erotics can be justified by an alarmingly growing number of pseudo-scientific books on the erotic cults of ancient India, from which the man in the street draws his information. So, while the academic Indology keeps aloof from these delicate problems, enterprising individuals are doing their best to quench the persistent thirst of the general public for the mysterious orgies of the East.

On the other hand, we have a fairly large number of serious studies promising, in their titles, to deal with sexual life in ancient India which, as a matter of fact, they do not. Any amount of learned opinions on marriage customs, social position of women or love poetry does not reveal anything about real erotics beyond, maybe, some vague statements of a general character.

If we turn to sexuological literature, we do not get much help, either. As far as I am informed, a reliable account of sexual life in antiquity, written from the medical point of view, simply does not exist.

True, we have a fine collection of outstanding ethnographical reports and studies on sexual life among primitive peoples, but it is advisable not to use them too freely. The transfer of modern findings and ideas into the distant past may prove to be a pleasant intellectual pastime, but hardly conclusive evidence.

Finally, there is a very small number of works which are really and above all concerned with sexual life in ancient India. These are, however, mostly confined to the classical discipline of erotics, with occasional references to its antecedents. No systematic study of the previous stages has ever

been undertaken and, as far as the oldest period of Indian cultural history is concerned, not a single book can be cited as a precedent for the present attempt.

The work, which is presented here, has been originally planned as a survey of ancient Indian erotics of the preclassical period, *i.e.* the epoch closely preceding the compilation of Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra*, the earliest preserved classical textbook of erotics. As a matter of fact, the main bulk of the study dealing with that period (which is the present writer's proper domain) had been prepared in the first instance. But, as soon as the ideas began to assume a definite shape, it became quite obvious that, without the necessary historical background, they could not be given proper treatment. With the exception of a few scholars who were interested in classical textbooks of erotics, nobody has worried about the terminology pertaining to sexual life and, accordingly, the erotic portions of ancient Indian texts have often been rendered in a very bewildering way. Furthermore, very few sexual terms are given by Sanskrit dictionaries in their precise meanings and some of them have not been registered as such at all. It is really astonishing to find out how perfunctorily such erotical passages have sometimes been dealt with.

Thus it happened that the present survey was worked out as a preliminary monographical study to the main period. It is neither complete nor fully conclusive. It may arouse more interest than acceptance. Perhaps it will also serve as an incentive to the study of ancient Indian erotics by other scholars, *viz.* those outside the ranks of professional Indologists, whose co-operation would ensure a fuller view of the tangled problems of Indian sexual life. An effective team-work including contributions from sexuologists, psychologists, sociologists etc. is an ardent hope for the future. The outward arrangement of the book has been accomodated to this purpose as much as possible. Most of the original quotations and accessory material has been shifted to the Notes. On the other hand, a short account of literary sources quoted in the text has been included for the sake of those who are not acquainted with the original documents.

Due to the strictly limited space assigned to each monograph appearing in this series, only the oldest period of Indus civilization and the Vedic age could be dealt with. It is hoped, nevertheless, that it will be possible to publish further volumes in future. In that case, the next volume would contain information drawn from the Sūtras and the Buddhist canonical literature, followed by an exposition of the records collected from the Epics and the Śāstras. Then, and only then, shall we be in a position to interpret Vātsyāyana's work on its own merits, *i.e.* in the light of the previous de-

velopment and, if possible, without the unreliable help provided by his commentators and successors. They are, in most cases, our only aid in the interpretation of Vātsyāyana's difficult Sūtras, in spite of the fact that they are many centuries younger and, accordingly, read the views of their own times into the original text.

Once a complete survey of Indian sexual terminology has been achieved, we shall have an important source of information on some salient features of social and intimate life in ancient India. It will substantially contribute to our meagre knowledge of the psychology of the ancient Indians, which represents one of the darkest pages of Indian cultural history. In this respect, we have still a long way to go. For example, nobody has, as yet, undertaken a systematic study of ancient Indian abusive speech and 'bad language' in general, in spite of the fact that impulsive speech and insulting utterances reveal much of racial, social and local psychology. Indeed, I can hardly account for the deplorable state of such studies in our own European languages!

As far as the interpretation of Indian erotic terms is concerned, certain concessions on my part were unavoidable. In many cases, I had to resort to Latin terminology. I could not afford to use colloquial English equivalents, because very often I was not quite sure whether such terms were still acceptable to the English reader. As a result, I am sorry to say, much of the convincing force of the original has been lost.

It goes without saying that a work like this cannot be translated from a Czech draft, but has to be written in English from the start, without any assistance from the mother tongue. It is my ardent hope, therefore, that competent scholars will make the necessary emendations whenever my imperfect knowledge of the English language has failed to find an adequate expression. I know I may be wrong in many respects, and I shall be very happy if anybody takes the pains to correct me. Otherwise, I am afraid, there would be not much hope of progress in this publicly acclaimed, but actually somewhat forlorn discipline.

The overwhelming majority of references found in this book were collected during my perusal of Vedic texts which have been, I am bound to repeat, until recently outside the scope of my studies. As a result, I do not claim either completeness of material or competence to solve certain knotty problems on which even the most erudite Vedic scholars do not see eye to eye.

Due to the considerable lacunae of Vedic literature in the Prague libraries I was unable to make use of several important studies which are known to me by their titles only. For example, I had no access to any English

translation of the Ṛgveda except that of R. T. H. Griffith, which was of very little use to me, indeed. I regret particularly that I could not see the fourth volume of Geldner's *Rig-Veda Translation* (Indexes, HOS No. 36), some of the latest works of L. Renou and J. Gonda, and practically the entire production of the Vishveshvaranand Institute, Hoshiarpur. Further, I could not utilize two important articles which were brought to my notice only at the last moment before the proofs were sent in, *viz.* H. Lommel, *Die Liebe in vedischer Dichtung* (Paideuma III, Heft 3—5, 1948, p. 102—11), and P. Thieme, *Jungfrauengatte* (Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung, 78. B., 3.—4. H., 1963, p. 161—248). I sincerely regret the unintentional omission of these two studies which could have shed new light on some problems discussed in this book.

Besides, I refrained from using the works of those scholars who had based their inquiries on the classical Sanskrit literature and from there drew their inferences concerning older, less explored material. In fact, I tried to keep strictly within the limits of the oldest sources mainly because of the inexcusably free analogies drawn by many authors on erotics between the Vedic material and any other available evidence, be it based on Sanskrit love poetry or the sexual life of the Eskimoes! Such a method has reduced many a collection of laboriously compiled material to what makes diverting reading but is incapable of proving anything.

I may add here, finally, that the translations of Vedic passages, when not stated otherwise, are mine.

*

I owe a special debt of gratitude to *Prof. Dr. Bernfried Schlerath* of the University of Frankfurt am Main, who made valuable suggestions on the clarification of certain issues and drew my attention to several important articles which would otherwise have escaped my notice.

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All these colleagues deserve my deep gratitude but, naturally, they are in no way responsible for the contents of the book.

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INTRODUCTION

Human life is ruled by a fixed set of interrelated physiological principles which can be considerably modified, but never changed completely. If we scrutinize human activities against the background of their historical, social and economic development (exclusive of their secondary manifestations), we are inevitably led to the conclusion that one of the most decisive factors underlying such activities is to be found in a perpetual exertion aimed at the fullest possible satisfaction of the basic physiological needs of the organism. These needs must be understood, primarily, in terms of the instincts of nourishment and sex respectively.

By these terms I understand an activity with inherited mechanisms, directed towards the satisfaction of hunger and thirst and the gratification of the sexual urge. Psychologically speaking, these activities provide the necessary conditions for the fulfilment of the ultimate need of every human being — the self-assertion and the extension of one's personality.

Of course, such terms as "hunger" or "sex" are but symbols which represent a whole complex of processes stimulating both the physical and psychical spheres of vital resources. Thus, for example, when we project the instinct of nourishment into a wider social context, we may discover that it provides powerful impulses to various activities in diverse spheres of labour, production, the creation and improvement of living conditions etc.

In an equal degree, the sexual urge, which can be even stronger and more urgent than the instinct of self-preservation, moulds the life and destiny of male and female upon its differently conditioned patterns. Its impact, however, cannot be discerned and analyzed so easily, because sexual mechanisms are much more intricate, operate more subtly and, last but not least, are substantially differentiated in each of the sexes.

As a result, whenever we penetrate deeper into the recesses of social and cultural history, we come across striking disproportions between the extent of knowledge pertaining to social and personal matters respectively. A detailed inquiry into the sphere of physiological interrelations and the ways in which they are manifested in the life of an individual as well as a whole social group would certainly elucidate many obscure notions in the

cultural history of mankind. The influence of sexual propensities on the structure and fortunes of human society is generally underestimated because, as it seems, very few people realize how much of their lifetime is spent on activities to which they have been impelled by sexual drives.

*

Before proceeding any further, several issues have to be settled. First, there is the problem of terminology used in general works on sexual life and erotics. Here we encounter certain unpleasant difficulties.

The terms concerning sexual life are used by many authors indiscriminately, without regard to their actual content and efficacy. Many of these words, moreover, encroach deeply into the realm of emotions where objective criteria are of no avail, not to mention such extremely inflated terms as 'love', which have completely lost their meaning.

The term "erotics" itself is understood in as many ways as there are people who use it. The dictionaries are mostly content with the poetical concept of 'sensuous love' or 'desire', transferring thus its import to a subjective level. The philological interpretation of erotics as 'amorous intercourse' or 'love' does not explain anything at all. Similarly, the term 'sexual love' is practically useless. No wonder that, under the circumstances, many people use the term 'erotics' whenever they think of love poetry, marriage customs or strip-tease!

The sexuological approach, on the other hand, is more realistic. It stresses the physiological basis of erotics, but with a full recognition of its social implications which are the daily concern of medical practice. Therefore we may agree with the sexuological concept of erotics as "processes in which psychical features of sexual phenomena are prominent", which may be further amplified as "complicated preparatory processes which are marked by the choice and inducement of a person to sexual intercourse."[1])

This definition duly stresses the psychical manifestations of sexual life and pays special attention to the transitional period of courtship. Nevertheless, we would like to extend its application to processes leading to the refinement of the physical act itself, irrespective of its object. As a result, we may define erotics simply as "the culture of sexual life", with all its essential characteristics provided by the physiological, psychological, historical and social background. In this sense, erotics includes the whole sphere of activities impelled primarily by the sexual drive, but going ultimately far beyond the initial impulse.

[1]) Josef Hynie, *Úvod do lékařské sexuologie* (Introduction to Medical Sexuology). Praha 1940, pp. 9,8.
Medical aspects should be carefully examined whenever we try to penetrate into the deeper layers of human personality. In our case, for example, the medical conception is quite close to the Indian ideas which contradict our inherited European dualism of "body and soul", firmly established in our Graeco-Christian cultural tradition. Due to this preconceived pattern, we often fail to grasp the Indian approach which is dominated by the idea of unity of physical and psychic processes, expressed in terms of psycho-somatic units.

We shall be interested mainly in the dynamical progression of erotics in successive stages of Indian cultural history, and we shall endeavour to trace the prerequisites of its further development, which gave rise to an extraordinary and in many respects exceptional culture of sexual life codified, in the end, in a generally recognized canon of erotics.

We shall try to exclude as far as possible the use of the term "love" from our inquiry. Its application has been over-extended in European languages and, consequently, we are unable to delineate its precise meaning. Within the last few decades, love has become one of the most overworked words in our vocabulary and, as such, it is totally incapable of being used in a well-defined, specific sense. Still, it is largely used in works on sexual life and, in many cases, the authors contradict themselves in its application. In fact, the use of the term 'love' became the apple of discord between Sigmund Freud and his followers.

According to psychoanalysis, love is an attenuated and aim-inhibited form of the sexual urge. Originally, Freud maintained that love was primarily objectless[2]) and used the term 'libido' in the original sense of the energy of the sexual urge. The sexual object provided simply the means by which the tension in the organism was eased.

Later on, however, he largely extended the use of terms like 'sex' and 'libido' to the emotional level and explained all kinds of love tendencies as sexual instincts that had been merely diverted from their sexual aim, but kept enough of their original impulses to make their identity recognizable.

According to Freud's theory, aim-inhibited love was, in the beginning, purely sensuous love and it is still the same in the unconscious life of men. The tender feelings called 'love' have been diverted from their primal sexual aims, but continue to keep some of them. Thus Freud included in sexual life those impulses which, according to his theory, were subjected to an inhibition from their original sexual goal or exchanged this goal for another, no longer sexual. He speaks of psychosexuality and identifies this

[2]) Sigmund Freud, *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie.* Leipzig und Wien ²1910, p. 13.

term with the German word 'Liebe', thus extending the meaning of the word 'sex' to such concepts as affection, attraction, love, friendship etc.

This carried him too far and the reaction, as expected, set in very soon. Most of his critics, among them some of his former students and staunch supporters, have pointed out the defects of his conception and tried to work out a new theory of love as a psychical phenomenon, independent of instinctive drives.

We cannot well discuss the technicalities of Freud's epoch-making teaching, and we are certainly incompetent to amend it. Equally, we have to resist the temptation to dwell on the objections raised by his followers as well as adversaries. Just to illustrate the whole issue, and to confirm our own conception of erotics, we may quote one example, *viz.* the opinion of Theodor Reik, one of Freud's distinguished students, whose numerous books are widely circulated, especially in the United States. His reflections are based on experience gained during his long medical practice.

Reik took great pains to show that sex and love are different in origin and nature.[3]) They can be united and directed to the same object, but on closer examination they can be easily differentiated. He sees sex as an instinct, a biological need, originating in the organism and conditioned by chemical changes in the physiological structure. The sexual urge, in short, is dependent on inner secretions and can be localized in the genitals and other erotogenic zones. Its aim is the disappearance of a physical tension. It can be casual about its object and is, in fact, modest in its demands. We can compare it to hunger, because it disappears after being satisfied.

Love, on the other hand, is always a personal relationship and never a biological need. It is highly discriminating and there is no such thing as an impersonal love. According to Reik, love is possible only as an emotion of one person to another, but the sex object (the desired one) and the love object (the adored one) can be two different persons. Even when the object is both loved and sexually desired, one can often discriminate between the sex appeal and the appeal of personality which are two different things. Moreover, love is a product of culture; it is not inborn and primal, but the fruit of a late psychical development.

There are many points in favour of such a conception of love, if we are prepared to exclude completely the sexual motivation. It is certainly not inborn, but a product of a conspicuous cultural development. We may

[3]) Theodor Reik, *Of Love and Lust.* New York (6th repr.) 1959, p.16 foll. Reik's works have the advantage of explaining difficult problems in an easy conversational style which, however, does not deviate from hard facts into a pleasant but meaningless chatter, like a number of psychoanalytical bestsellers.

add here, that the so-called 'primitive love' is usually nothing else than sexual desire. Some languages do not possess a term for love at all; it can be scarcely found among the primitives in general (see ERE *s.v.*).

But it is hardly possible to assign precisely differentiated distinctions to sex and love in this uncompromising way, and to agree with the extreme contention that sex and love are so different that they belong to distinct realms of research fields: sex to the domain of biochemistry and physiology, love to the domain of the psychology of emotions. In proving that Freud was wrong about love, Reik went too far in his depreciation of sex, thus emptying out the baby with the bath.

The indiscriminate use of the word "sex" itself is very unfortunate. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the primary meaning of sex as "the distinction between male and female in general" and the Concise Ox. Dict. offers an even wider explanation of sex as "being male or female or hermaphrodite". Nowadays, 'sex' and its sublimer pendant 'Eros' share the fate of the word 'love'; sometimes all three are used promiscuously. Therefore, any psychological treatment which avails itself of terms like "sex" or "Eros" runs the risk of being confusing. Anyhow, one of the striking symptoms of our streamlined civilization seems to be our perplexingly inadequate vocabulary.[4])

The reflections on sex and love, adduced above, served as an example as well as an aid to the formulation of our own ideas about erotics. We may concede that the sexual urge is an instinct originating in the organism, and that libido is dependent on the inner secretion of the sex glands. It is an inherited phenomenon of Nature, common to men and beasts, with a firmly fixed set of mechanisms which work on the same principles within the communities of the same species. We know, that sexual excitement is directly dependent on the ripening of the germ-cells and their preparedness for reproduction. The hormones produced by the sex glands are mainly responsible for the mounting tension in the organism. The removal of the reproductive organs in animals, on the other hand, results in a total elimination of the sex drive and the accompanying psychical phenomena.[5])

[4]) It is interesting to note that the word "erotics" itself is not yet fully recognized in English. The overwhelming majority of authors uses the word "erotics", which appears also in H. W. Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (repr., Oxford 1961, p.147). *The Oxford English Dictionary*, nevertheless, ignores this form altogether and prescribes the term "erotic", which is used quite exceptionally in practice.

[5]) Julius Komárek, *Milování v přírodě* (Making Love in Nature). Praha 1946, p. 29 foll. This is a remarkable exposition of various aspects of sexual life among insects, birds and beasts. I am not aware of any translation of this commendable book. The learned author has observed that in animals, whose sex glands were removed, all sexual impulses and even interest in the other sex totally vanished.

Moreover, we may assert that the sexual urge is subjected to periodical fluctuations of increase and decrease, which are dependent on the abundance of food and on a favourable climate.[6])

It would seem, therefore, that the sexual instincts are inherited equally by men and beasts according to an unchanging and unchangeable pattern and, as a result, that there is no need to discuss them beyond these generally recognized arguments. The analogy of hunger and thirst has been often adduced in support of such a conclusion.

I believe, however, that throughout our previous examination we have been led through a series of seducive half-truths and that analogies, however penetrating they may seem, do not explain much.

The sexual urge, if taken at its face value, is an organic drive comparable to other physiological needs. But it is a curious instinct, indeed. It occupies a special place within the structure of the physiological functions of the organism, in fact, a position so extraordinary that it sometimes seems difficult to be placed on the same footing as the other inborn instincts.

At the moment of culmination, sexual excitement can switch off all the other instincts from their normal subconscious functions and the individual becomes insensitive to hunger, pain or danger. In extreme cases it proves to be stronger than the fear of death — and yet, it can be wholly eliminated by a mere surgical intervention! It strives for the ultimate bliss of the organism, which can be explained as a biochemical process relieving the organism of its unbearable tension — and yet, such a simple and purely physiological mechanism works under an enormous strain incurring innumerable hardships in the psychic sphere of the organism, a procedure which drives men to complicated activities on various levels of mental exertion, and which can substantially divert even the course of their lives.[7])

Not love but the sexual urge motivates human behaviour very strongly and, even if we do not sufficiently understand the laws governing its operation, we can hardly reduce them to biochemical changes inherited and realized by reproductive cells and glandular hormones. We are bound to take other factors into account — and that is where the function of erotics comes into play.

There can be no doubt, of course, that in anthropoids and especially in men, the higher nervous system plays also an important role in their sexual aspirations and activities though, as it seems, some authors tend to overstress its importance.

[6]) The laws of mating seasons are invalid only in men and domesticated animals who are secured against the want of nourishment and unfavourable climatic conditions. But even here we may find survivals of the original nature of the laws of pairing. In the North, sexual life is still strongly stimulated by the appearance of warmer seasons, while in a tropical climate, courtship and mating, uninfluenced by seasonal changes, are interrupted only by occasional conceptions and deliveries.

The erotic connotation of the rainy season, which became popular in Indian classical literature, was based on quite different considerations.

[7]) According to latest statistics, 65 per cent of suicidal attempts in this country were motivated by purely erotic failures, and the figure is certainly far below the real number in view of the intimate character of such an examination and of the uncommunicative attitude of the persons questioned.

We have only vague ideas about the interrelations of the sexual drive and mental activity, but we know for certain that man is distinguished from the rest of the animal world by his ability to control his sexual energy and to divert it eventually to other channels in the pursuit of his interests. Besides, he is able to cultivate his sexual drive and to refine sexual phenomena to a degree unknown among animals. Moreover, as a social being he can use his abilities for the benefit of the whole social group.

The cultivation of sexual life and of its psychic accessories can, of course, be imagined only as a late historical development. Erotics, as we prefer to call it, is only possible when a certain phase of individual and social development has been reached and so, we may maintain, it is fundamentally a product of human culture. Accordingly, a culture of sexual life has been developed to various degrees in various stages of human civilization and it reflects specific conditions provided by the same features which characterize the given state of society. It will be necessary, therefore, to trace the origins of erotics to the sexual life of ancient cultured societies and to examine all those sexual phenomena which might involve potential nuclei of erotic accomplishments.

Ancient India offers an ideal ground for such studies on account of its uninterrupted social and cultural development as well as of its rich traditional lore unbiassed by sexual taboos current in other parts of the ancient world. In short, erotics can be regarded as an integral part of ancient Indian culture. It has to be studied, therefore, against the background of Indian social history.

This is, however, not the whole truth. The cultivation of sexual relations is closely connected with other cultural phenomena, but it is also directly related to the laws of physiological constituents, which means that a highly developed state of society does not automatically lead to an equally high standard of erotics, and *vice versa*.

For example, the overstrain of an industrialized society may lead to a decrease of physiological potentialities, including sexual functions. Luxury and comfort provided by modern transport facilities may be detrimental to vital physiological functions of the organism. In many cases, television robs man not only of his free time, but also of the opportunity to develop his erotic personality. The mass production of sexually exciting entertainment is necessarily accompanied by a progressive deterioration of erotic

values.[8]) Hand in hand with a technically accomplished culture we have achieved no more than a technically accomplished system of procreation and contraception. Consequently, we can hardly boast of our erotic exploits. If anyone ridicules the erotic lore of ancient India, his laugh should sound strange in his own ears.[9])

*

When speaking about sexual relations, we shall draw no distinction between the so-called "normal" and "abnormal" ways of sexual gratification. These qualifications are purely arbitrary and possess no objective value. Besides, they are liable to changes caused by external forces and their validity is usually limited to specific historical conditions. We have no objective criteria for calling certain kinds of sexual gratification "abnormal". Perhaps we would contribute to a better understanding of our (not Indian) ethics, while doing so. It is very easy to brand certain texts as immoral, obscene or filthy, but most authors of such proscriptions forget that they do not interpret the moral values of these texts, but of their own ethical code. At any rate, we are discussing erotics, not morals. Perhaps in another two hundred years, our descendants will blush at our language as we blush today at certain expressions used by venerated Fathers of our medieval Church, which, at the time, did not rouse the slightest indignation among their pious listeners and were not in any way regarded as obscene.

Moreover, it is vitally important for us to dissociate ourselves from a rebuking attitude imposed on us by our personal inclinations and likings. We must slowly get used to the idea that, for example, if we examine the merits of our contemporary erotics, strip-tease does not necessarily embody a moral deterioration and chronic hypereroticism of modern civilization, but is rather a symptom of a deplorable decrease of erotic values and sexual vigour.

[8]) "The longer I live the more I realise the immense importance for the individual of the development through the play-function of erotic personality, and for human society of the acquirement of the art of love. At the same time I am ever more astonished at the rarity of erotic personality and the ignorance of the art of love even among those men and women, experienced in the exercise of procreation, in whom we might most confidently expect to find such development and such art. At times one feels hopeless at the thought that civilisation in this supremely intimate field of life has yet achieved so little." Havelock Ellis, *On Life and Sex*. New York (repr., A Signet book) 1962, p. 81—2.

[9]) "The secrets of love-making are many and there is now no need to search for them in the pedantic lore of ancient books. Two lovers who are interested in each other will discover those new mysteries of love which best suit themselves..." Havelock Ellis, op. cit., p. 48!

Similarly, when dealing with child marriages in medieval India, we should stop worrying about the moral depravity of their supporters, and pay due attention to the disastrous effects of sexual intercourse, forced sometimes by adult men on bodily and mentally undeveloped girls. It is highly commendable to go through the matter-of-fact medical reports on such cases, appended to the proscribed and finally condemned „Mother India" by Catharine Mayo. As far as I remember, not a single voice was raised in righteous indignation against this evidence amidst the tumult of fierce insults and outraged denunciations of the American authoress whose naive book was wiped out from the memory of the next generation.

Under the circumstances, we should apply special criteria only to such sexual activities which are avowedly harmful to the physical or mental health of the persons concerned. We have other reasons to do so, as well. It has been proved beyond doubt, namely, that there are absolutely no aberrations from "normal" sexual intercourse which could be ascribed exclusively to human beings. All kinds of the so-called perversities or unnatural gratification of sexual urge have been observed in animal species as well. They are performed instinctively with the aim of appeasing an urgent tension of the organism or, as it is called more sublimely, the amorous excitement. Nobody has taught or forbidden the animals to do so — and yet, we cannot talk of a purely instinctive mechanism. After a long and careful study of various kinds of "homosexual" tendencies and different ways of self-gratification among animals, it has been ascertained that these phenomena are not distributed equally among all species. Finally, a surprising conclusion has been reached, *viz.* that the more intelligent the animal, the more resourceful his way of sexual self-gratification. [10])

That does not mean, of course, that all these activities are quite harmless or even that we should encourage them. All the same, it is our duty to register them exactly as they are found in the texts. Otherwise, we cannot claim any reasonable standard of objectivity and our account of ancient societies will remain lamentably incomplete.[11])

Besides, there are many problems which can be solved only in co-operation with other experts who are able to view them from a different

[10]) J. Komárek, op. cit., p. 63. As a result, various ways of sexual gratification cannot be explained solely on grounds of physiological mechanisms, *i.e.* instinctive drives and inner secretion of the sex glands.

[11]) Thus, for example, J. Griffith omits an ancient harmless rite in his translation of a Vedic text with this comment: "This and the following nine stanzas are not reproducible even in the semi-obscurity of a learned European language; and stanzas 30,31 would be unintelligible without them" (VS. trsl., p.213, n.20).
Similar cases could be cited *ad libitum*.

angle. That is possible only if the original sources are made available to them. Until recently, scientific accounts of ancient Indian culture were accessible to a limited number of students equipped with the necessary, highly specialized knowledge. But works like "L'Inde classique" or "The Wonder that was India"[12]) have opened new ways of approach to those people who are genuinely interested in ancient India without having had the opportunity to undergo the strenuous Indological curriculum. They provoked unusual interest in wide circles of educated readers but, naturally, such works are quite rare, because they make considerable demands on their authors.

As far as detailed monographical studies are concerned, however, they usually pay no heed to the interests of other experts and, accordingly, they cannot be utilized by them in their respective disciplines. That is perhaps one of the main reasons why we have such a small number of reliable accounts of ancient Indian sciences, medicine etc. at our disposal.[13]) The same holds good for erotics, too. For example, an Indologist may be amused by the assertion that sexual intercourse results in the wearing out of a man, while the abstention from sexual intercourse causes the wearing out (or wasting) of women.[14]) He will leave it at that or, maybe, will plunge into

[12]) apart from established German series of high repute, which are usually specialized in various subjects like languages, literatures, religion, philosophy etc.
L. Renou — J. Filliozat and others, *L'Inde classique*. Vol. I. Paris 1947. The work has been translated into English and published in small volumes in India ten years later.
A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*. London 1954, reprinted many times afterwards.
These works represent highest achievements of accomplished scholarship, as their authors succeeded in explaining the most tangled problems in simple words and comprehensible language.

[13]) The works of Jean Filliozat, who happens to be a physician and an Indologist in one person, are the exception that proves the rule.
As a result, very little is generally known about the remarkable achievements of ancient Indian scholars, though some of their findings considerably outrun corresponding Western discoveries which are enthusiastically hailed in our school-books. The cleavage between the humanities and the social sciences, and the need to bring textual and contextual studies closer together has been discussed in connection with the role of anthropology in the studies on religion by Milton Singer, *Text and Context in the Study of Contemporary Hinduism*. ALB XXV (1961), p.274—303.

[14]) *puruṣasya maithunaṃ jarā. strīṇām amaithunaṃ jarā*. Cāṇakya Sūtrāṇi 284—5. N. Ch. Bandyopadhyaya, the editor, translates: "Excessive sexual indulgence ruins men. Sexual abstinence ruins women." The word *jarā*, however, does not mean a ruin, but the act of becoming old through wearing out (√*jṝ*) of the organism. This assertion is not necessarily a commonplace moral injunction, as understood by the translator who forced such meaning on the reader by inserting the word "excessive", which is not implied by the original version. It might be interesting to hear from a sexuologist whether there is some rational grain of truth in this unusual statement.
The same thought has been repeated elsewhere, *e.g.* in Garuḍa Purāṇa 115,10:

a lengthy philological argument about the language of the Sanskrit sentence. To a sexuologist or psychologist, however, such an assertion might be worth more than a smile, if he does not need to spend most of his time in search of it amidst a mass of abstruse philological material.

There are still many *desiderata* in the studies of ancient Indian culture. While stressing the philosophical values of Indian thought, we often tend to neglect the psychological approach, where we could utilize the achievements of modern research. India is the only country which has produced an ancient "tropical" civilization known so far, but we know very little about mental propensities of cultured people in the tropics. We are aware of erotic trends in Indian religions, but we are unable to ascertain how far women took part in the formulation of religious ideas and what their practical application among womenfolk was. Hand in hand with the philosophical appraisal of renunciation and rigorous self-denial, we should try to estimate the psychological background of ascetic practices, especially the masochistic tendencies in bodily mortifications and gruesome self-tortures, which may compensate the inhibited excitement of crude sensuous pleasures. In religious erotics, we shall have to retrace the origins and development of sexual ascetism in connection with masochism and sadism of renowned sages of the traditional lore and the reaction to it, as expressed in the Buddhist Middle Way and the brāhmanic teaching of *trivarga*. Similarly, the relation between ascetism and seclusion has never been properly explored. It seems, however, that the latter was not necessarily accompanied by a complete sexual abstinence. But we are unable to estimate the force of erotic impulses even in the lives of those recluses who, as we know from later sources, lived in small communities together with their families.

Furthermore, it would be certainly rewarding to study the behaviour and mentality of cultured people in the tropics. Usually, we recognize the influence of moist heat and vegetarian food on the efficiency of mind and body, but only seldom do we take into account other, seemingly less important factors. Especially the influence exerted by dress and the way of dressing (and undressing in erotics!) is generally overlooked. Anyway, dress is our inseparable companion throughout life and it may considerably stimulate not only our personal behaviour, but also the mental inclinations of a whole generation. In this respect, the psychological evaluation of the fashion prevailing through a certain historical period may provide important clues to many otherwise uncommunicative data.

asaṃbhogo nārīṇāṃ jarā "the absence of sexual intercourse causes the wearing out (old age) in women".

For example, we would scarcely find a Sanskrit equivalent to the adjective "starchy", frequently used by us in the figurative sense.[15]) Similarly, our ideas of comfort, expressed by the phrase 'to be comfortable', are closely connected with the removal of dress or of its parts in Europe. Our mental reactions to formal dress or uniform are far from being negligible and the problem of dressing in the tropics is not much less important, though from another point of view.

Equally, erotic mentality is strongly influenced by the scarcity of dress, even if not favourably in this case. It is a well-known fact that complete or even partial nakedness of female body cannot stimulate erotic excitement, whenever it becomes an acknowledged habit or circumstantial necessity. On the other hand, dress can be an unbelievably heavy psychological burden, but it can also instigate deep social complications. As a rule, Europeans become fully aware of these facts as soon as they land on the Indian soil.

In any case, the problems connected with the tropical climate do not play a decisive role throughout the oldest period of Indian history and may be reserved, therefore, for a future inquiry.

We should also try to avoid the excessive use of terms which implant specific European ideas in the Indian cultural context. We should certainly think twice before translating *e.g. kāma* by "love", or *dharma* by "religion" etc. Unfortunately, we are often 'translating' our words and ideas in the literary sense of the Latin expression. Perhaps we should interpret more and translate less, even if the result will not be very attractive at first sight. We often forget, as someone has said, that translations are like women: if they are faithful, they are not beautiful — and if they are beautiful, they are not faithful!

*

Finally, we have to mention another important angle to the study of ancient Indian erotics. It must be stressed at the outset, namely, that throughout our following inquiry we shall be mostly concerned with the well-off strata of Indian society. It is not only because the history of mankind has been, for the most part, almost completely oblivious of the poor and despised,[16]) but also because it suits our design.

[15]) We would find a number of proverbs and every-day phrases unknown in India, which are directly derived from habits connected with dressing. It is surprising to find out that no comparative studies of the kind have been made even in our own environment. The same holds good for the sphere of food where, for example, the Czechs sharply contrast with the Germans, their closest cultural neighbours.

[16]) As a matter of fact, we do not know much about the rich in ancient India, either. With the exception of votive inscriptions, Indian history did not record names of individuals merely on account of their wealth. The name of the millionaire Anāthapiṇḍika, for example, was preserved in Buddhist records in connection with his generous support of the Buddhist community which had no other admiration for his riches.

The growth and advancement of erotics directly depends on favourable conditions created by a certain amount of leisure and comfort. The enrichment and refinement of crude sexual relations cannot appear unless one is delivered from pressing material needs and tiresome earning of one's daily bread. In this context, the gratification of sexual desire can be likened to the corresponding appeasement of hunger and thirst.

A hungry man does not attach so much importance to the quality as to the quantity of the food received. It makes no difference to him whether the food has been served on a leaf or on a silver plate, and it is of no consequence whether it was done so on a dusty road or in a luxurious dining-room. In fact, a hungry man does not taste and appreciate his food; he merely consumes it. Therefore, a hungry man can never be a real gourmet!

Similarly, a full appreciation of sexual experience cannot be realized without a careful preparation, very much akin to the arrangement of a banquet table. Good taste, creation of optimal surroundings and the physical as well as psychic tuning of both partners are the main prerequisites in both cases. That implies, of course, the absence of pressing worries and existential anxieties, together with a certain degree of luxury attainable under definite, financially and socially favourable conditions.

Between hard work and deep sleep, amidst an endless stream of current daily worries, the spare energy transformed into sexual potency usually amounts to not much more than the gratification of the crudest carnal need and the begetting of children — a feat that can be accomplished with the least possible effort, not to mention intelligence. The ancient Indians were, to my knowledge, the only people in the world who were fully aware of the implications of this.

Naturally, the development and conscious cultivation of erotic principles was never the concern of the majority, even in India. But, in order to realize new concepts and to put them into practice, a few individuals who 'can and will' are always needed. These few will be in the centre of our interest, especially in the classical period when erotics was conceived as a science and as an art, not only on historical grounds, but also because we are firmly convinced that modern man can still profit by their advice, no matter whether he is chasing after a slice of bread or rushing to the Moon. It seems that the truth begins to dawn upon him, as he begins to realize

that, without the ancients' hardly-earned experience and knowledge, his amazing scientific and technical achievements could, in the end, serve to precipitate his ruin.

CHAPTER I

PREHISTORIC PERIOD

The history of Indian culture can be roughly divided into two successive stages. The earlier period is represented by archaeological excavations revealing a vast number of objects together with certain written documents which we are unable to read, while the later phase, on the contrary, abounds in literary records which we can read and appreciate, but without the opportunity of corroborating our knowledge by any other evidence.

This situation is certainly not very encouraging to the student of Indian cultural history, as it leaves too much space for speculation and tentative guesses which may prove a wild-goose chase in the end. Such perils are particularly imminent when probing into the yet unexplored depths of intimate human relations. Here, we must sometimes take the risk of being forced into conclusions which may be completely wide of the mark. Whether we like or not, our present inquiry is not exempt from such failings.

The earliest stage in the history of Indian culture (in the real sense of the word) is represented by the Indus valley civilization, known also as the Harappan culture and sometimes inaccurately called as Proto-Indian.

Our ideas concerning the sexual life of its originators are quite nebulous, to put it mildly. The clues are few and the results meagre. We can ask all kind of questions, but we shall seldom get a satisfactory answer. This unfortunate circumstance can be easily explained by the character of the available evidence.

Archaeological discoveries have provided ample evidence as far as the general lay-out of this civilization is concerned but, whenever pursued in detail, they disappoint our hopes. We know a great deal about the highly developed urbanistic scheme of Indus cities and their material equipment. The discerning eyes of archaeology have been able to penetrate even into the innermost privacy of individual homes — but at that point we are left facing blank walls and wondering what to do next. The carefully excavated

and classified objects and installations produce a dumb testimony and, it is to be feared, this will remain so as long as we do not come across any other, more communicative documents (which is not altogether impossible but, on the whole, highly improbable).

Consequently, we know very little of these cities' inhabitants. We do not know who they were, how they lived, what language(s) they spoke or what sort of religion they professed. Yet, in spite of these difficulties, we shall try to put together all the available scraps of information pertaining to our quest.

We are able to examine only the last phase of this enigmatic culture, *i.e.* the period within the millennium of 2500—1500 B. C., which is the only one we know at present to a certain degree of accuracy, notwithstanding the latest trend in archaeological research marked by a tendency to push back the end of this civilization by a couple of centuries.[17]) For many good reasons it is not advisable to dig for information deeper into the past or farther beyond the massive walls of the cities. As a result, we shall deal with a comparatively short span of life of a developed society whose pattern underwent no substantial changes during that period.[18])

We do not know who ruled over the ancient Indus cities. The scholars are almost unanimous about a centralized type of government wielding autocratic powers and ruling over a vast territory amalgamated by the great navigable river, the main artery of communication between the capital cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappā, but they differ on many other points concerning the tangled network of social interrelations.[19])

In recent years, especially after India's partition in 1947, further research, conducted on a limited scale by Indian scholars, has disclosed Harappan settlements as far as Rupar in Punjab in the North and Lothal and Rangpur in Kathiawar in the South. Until now, however, nothing essentially new has come out of these excavations that would substantially modify our ideas about private life of the Harappan people.[20])

[17]) Cf. B. B. Lal, *A Picture Emerges: An Assessment of the Carbon-14 Datings of the Protohistoric Cultures of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent.* AI 18—19 (1962—1963), p. 219.

[18]) Stuart Piggott, *Prehistoric India to 1000 B.C.* Harmondsworth (Penguin Books) 1950 (repr. 1952), p. 144.

[19]) such as are the problems of guilds, slavery, caste system etc. See *e.g.* Piggott, op. cit., p.138 on castes, contrary to Ernest Mackay, *Early Indus Civilizations.* London ²1948, p. 120.

The question of slave labour employed in the Indus cities has been often discussed, too. A good survey with a rich bibliography is given by Dev Raj Chanana, *Slavery in Ancient India.* New Delhi 1960.

[20]) Until now, the results of these excavations, carried out by Indian archaeologists, have been scattered in various Indian journals, some of which are not easily accessible in Europe.

If we sum up the generally accepted data, we get a contour picture of a well-to-do society of cosmopolitan character, buzzing with lively trade traffic and stimulated by a keen interest in hoarding wealth and sustaining personal welfare, perhaps with less enthusiasm for official pomp in state ceremonial and religious worship (so palpably missed by most scholars concerned).[21])

The lack of monumental architecture and the absence of notable public institutions (with very few exceptions) suggest that private homes were important centres of social as well as religious activities. The existence of bathrooms in the houses and an excellent drainage system in the cities indicate a high standard of both communal and personal hygiene, a feature which is found quite exceptionally in other civilizations, including Europe and later India, until very recent times.

The excavations have revealed a rich variety of cosmetics and other means of enhancing the outward appearance and personal charm, which were probably used by both men and women. Moreover, there is nothing in the planning of the houses to suggest that women of Mohenjo-daro and Harappā were kept in strict seclusion. It is quite possible, therefore, that they had considerable social status,[22]) though little is known of their duties and role in the life of the community and our deductions are purely hypothetical.

In short, all these facts indicate that the well-to-do strata of Indus cities formed a community of undeniable social distinction. We may, perhaps, assume that these people were rather busy tradesmen and matter-of-fact officials than sophisticated thinkers and ardent believers. The central planning of the cities and the urbane discipline prevailing over long centuries presupposes an overall control by an individual or rather an organized body of men (nobility?). In spite of the generally accepted idea of a sacerdotal authority combined with an autocratic power, which was based more on foreign models than on the internal evidence, there are no decisive indications of the dominating influence of religion in the Indus civilization. This conclusion has been confirmed by the latest excavations at Lothal.[23])

The long-standing economic stability, upset only occasionally by floods and the raids of neighbouring tribes, had brought about, as Mackay puts it,

[21]) Even the general characteristics of the Indus society widely differ in the views of scholars. Cf. Walter Ruben, *Einführung in die Indienkunde.* Berlin 1954, p. 66 foll., quite contrary to the judgment of R. F. S. Starr, *Indus Valley Painted Pottery.* Princeton 1941, p. 6 (quoted in AI, l. c., p. 45).

[22]) Mackay, op. cit., p. 27.

[23]) S. R. Rao, *Further Excavations at Lothal.* Lalit Kalā, No. 11, April 1962 (publ. 1965), p. 15.

"the atrophy of the artistic sensibilities" of the inhabitants of the Indus cities.[24]) From an artistic point of view, the Indus civilization is really one of the least attractive phases of cultural development in antiquity.

Under these circumstances, therefore, we cannot expect any remarkable progress in the development of erotics, either. As we have seen, these people were rather unimaginative in their artistic expression, which is one of the prerequisites of erotics.

On the same grounds, however, we may expect prostitution to play an important role in the life of these communities. Beside wealthy families permanently settled in the cities, a number of caravans and travellers as well as village folk must have called frequently for various transactions which involved exchange of goods and other commodities. The cities, on their part, must have arranged for provisions ensuring that a considerable amount of the visitors' income would be paid back to the communal or governmental funds by ways of religious establishments, entertainment facilities and other socially expedient amenities to which brothels and prostitution in general formed an important complement.

We cannot go much further than this statement because, quite understandably, very few archaeologists would care to look for such unholy establishments within the premises of their excavations though, it ought to be added, several public buildings of unknown purpose have already been dug up. It would not be reasonable to suppose that all such installations had been alotted outside the cities, if only for economic reasons. In any case, the excavations do not offer us much assistance in this respect.

There is only one object known so far, which can be of some value as indirect evidence. It is the well-known little bronze figure of a young girl, found in an unexceptionable archaeological context of Mohenjo-daro. The statuette is exquisitely modelled, with full lips and slender limbs, in an unusual posture. Quite evidently, she represents a Proto-Australoid type and her hairdressing and spectacular adornment strikingly resembles the clay figurines found in the Kulli Culture of South Baluchistan, though the artistic merits of this single specimen are much superior to those crude, schematized pottery figurines. The girl's dark complexion adds to the charm of this little piece of fine artistic imagination.

Archaeologists believe that there were permanent trade connections between South Baluchistan communities and Indus cities and they think it possible that "the merchants returning from the Baluchi hills may well

[24]) Mackay, op. cit., p. 50.

have brought back with them women as well as merchandise."[25]) They usually view this figurine as a Dancing-Girl[26]) brought with other girls from the hills to the cities for the entertainment of their tired, wealthy hosts. There are others who go still further and look at the figurine as a possible representation of a temple-dancer of Mohenjo-daro.[27])

Though the identification with a dancing-girl may be correct, it seems very unlikely that a temple-dancer, a predecessor of later *deva-dāsīs* attached to Hindu temples, would have been recruited from the aboriginal dark population of the neighbouring villages or mountains. In fact, any other explanation is equally feasible as there is nothing to indicate that the figurine's posture is related particularly to dancing.

The girl's attitude seems to be, above all, a distinctly provoking one. It is, therefore, quite probable that her main attraction did not lie in dancing, though we shall never learn her real social status and legitimate profession.

What is more important for us, however, is the fact that the figurine embodies a type of youthful tenderness with a marked boyish flavour that strongly reminds us of ancient Greece. Such a type sharply contrasts with the later ideal of feminine grace and beauty, untiringly represented in younger Indian sculpture. As the statuette provides the only instance of such a type among the Indus objects, it is not impossible that it reflects foreign taste which appreciated this type of feminine beauty more than the local connoisseurs.

A large number of various human figurines have been unearthed in Indus cities as well as in the Baluchistan village communities. Only nine human figures have been recovered so far at Lothal[28]) and none at all (except one fragment which may be a human leg) at Rangpur in Gujarat.[29]) Many of them are pottery figurines of an almost nude female richly decorated with jewellery and a curious headdress, identified as the Great Mother Goddess whose cult was and still is almost universal among wide circles of the Indian village population.[30])

There is one sealing which represents a female from whose womb a plant

[25]) Piggott, op. cit., p. 115.
[26]) ib., p. 177 passim.
[27]) Mackay, op. cit., p. 73.
[28]) S. R. Rao, op. cit., p. 27.
[29]) S. R. Rao, *Excavations at Rangpur and other Explorations in Gujarat.* AI 18—19 (1962—1963), p. 47.
[30]) For terracotta Mother Goddess figurines see also N. C. Majumdar, *Explorations in Sind.* Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India. No. 48 (Delhi 1934), Pl. XXI. and XXXIV.

issues, a clear indication of an earth-goddess connected with vegetation. Similar figurines, found in the valley of the Zhob river in North Baluchistan, are a gruesome embodiment of the Mother Goddess as the guardian of the dead and, in one case, the exaggerated vulva and thighs of the figure provides a fertility symbol which connects this terrifying deity with the other Mothers in their double manifestation, at once benignant and malevolent (cf. the later Devī as Kālī, Raktadantī etc., and Kanyākumārī, Sarvamaṅgalā etc., on the other hand).

It is noteworthy that there are practically no signs of an ardent religious worship at sites excavated in Gujarat, except some indications of a possibly later fire-cult.[31]) We find a similar situation at Rupar in Punjab. An explanation of these discrepancies is to be expected in the future, but there seems to be something wrong in the whole picture as constructed so far.[32])

Male figures have been also found at several sites of the excavations, but in far less numbers than the female. They are almost invariably nude, but the generative organ is only roughly indicated in most cases.[33]) Again, the identification of those figures with gods and heroes is quite arbitrary.

Female breasts are variously represented, from a slight indication up to a prominent distinction, but there is usually no exaggeration which would stress the maternal aspect or, as in the later sculptures, fully rounded forms that were prerogatives of youthful grace. On the contrary, some figurines which appear to depict a young goddess, show pendant breasts like those of aged women.[34]) Nevertheless, the female figurines are in general well--proportioned, with broad shoulders, a narrow waist and exquisite limbs. In some of them, the navel or breasts are slightly emphasized, in others limbs are broken or breasts have fallen off.

The female figures are clearly distinguished by their fanciful headdresses and an overwhelming number and size of jewellery and ornaments. So far,

[31]) The scarcity of cult objects such as the figure of the Mother Goddess is really surprising. We know that she was and still is venerated mostly among the poorer strata of the population, and these outposts of the Indus civilization are marked by a steady lowering of the living standard. The excavations there, however, are of a very recent date and it is yet impossible to predict what will they reveal in the deeper layers.

[32]) Many scholars suppose that frequent bathing was a ritual. There is no direct evidence in support of this view, except the existence of both private and public baths, about which we can do little more than speculate.

[33]) See Madho Sarup Vats, *Excavations at Harappā*. Delhi 1940, P. I. p. 292—300; P. II. (Plates), 1—69, 76—7.
Only four male figures were discovered at Lothal, all of them crudely modelled.

[34]) Ernest J. H. Mackay, *Chanhu-Daro Excavations*. New Haven (Am. Or. Soc.). 1943, p. 115.

nobody has tried to find out whether there are various types of hairdressing that would indicate a difference in social status or distinction of the respective figurines. We know that hairdressing remained an important accessory to female beauty throughout successive phases of India's past. Already in the Vedic period, women took great care in their hair and in some texts, certain types of head-ornament are mentioned, which we are unable to identify. These problems are considerably complicated in the Indus culture by our uncertainty as to which of these figures we may ascribe divine aspects and as to what extent we can infer from their appearance what the people of that period actually looked like. The curious representation of these figurines' feminine aspects, together with the yet unexplained caricature of some of their faces, strangely contrasts with their hairdresses and ornaments — perhaps too strangely to allow us to overlook the distortions and take the rest for conclusive evidence. In any case, it seems highly improbable that these figurines should serve as replicas of real women, not to mention the obvious implication that we cannot imagine a woman with such an elaborate hairdress to have engaged in any kind of activities beyond a daily concern for her beauty.

Thus, even after a careful scrutiny of the available evidence, we are led to the conclusion that sexual characteristics play no important role in the presentation of the figurines found in Indus cities. Nothing whatever suggests that their existence can be connected with any erotic practices[35]) or, that there is a direct connection between them and the erotic symbols known from the classical period.

As far as the Mother cults are concerned, I see no sufficient reasons to regard them as endowed with erotic propensities. The same can be assumed of the ancient mother right which is predominantly a social phenomenon. Besides, the role played by erotics in the most primitive society is hopelessly beyond the scope of modern research and to make inferences in those times from the ethnographical evidence of the last two centuries seems to be, as far as sexual problems are concerned, more perplexing than helpful.

We have also evidence of a phallic worship in the Indus civilization. The symbol which represents the Hindu god Śiva of later times is the *liṅga*, a phallic emblem venerated all over India much more than any other image of this deity.

A large number of cone-shaped stones of considerable size has been

[35]) It seems that nobody has yet seriously considered the possibility that these figurines were used in magic, especially as 'love' charms for which we find abundant proofs in the Vedic literature.

recovered at Mohenjo-daro and Harappā and it was easy to identify them with the *liṅgas* used nowadays as the most usual representation of Śiva, though it cannot be asserted that they were associated with the worship of Śiva at that early date. Some of the *liṅgas* are variously decorated, but they are all clearly stylized replicas of the male member. The number of these objects found in Gujarat is again surprisingly small.

The riddle of certain large stone rings identified by some scholars with the *yoni*, the female counterpart of the phallic symbol, remains unsolved. None of them had been found so far in closer association with the supposed *liṅga*. There is, moreover, another and, as it looks, perhaps more feasible explanation put forward by others, *viz.* that the rings were originally segments of columns which once supported the portico of a building. It seems, in any case, that the veneration of *yoni* never played a major part in the phallic cult of Lord Śiva.

There are no indications that these *yonis* had been somehow associated with the Great Mother Goddess.

In connection with the phallic worship we have to mention the "Deity with horns", a nude figure in a ritualistic posture, identified by Sir John Marshall as a representation of the youthful Śiva Naṭeśa, in his aspect of Paśupati, the Lord of Beasts. This deity, found on three seal-amulets at Harappā, has in two cases pronounced fertility or vegetation aspects[36]) which are analogous with the later Śiva's personification of the reproductive powers of Nature.

This identification of the "Proto-Śiva", as Marshall has called the figure, has led to some wild speculation. It was almost generally recognized that the history of Hinduism will have to be rewritten in the light of the new revealing facts which included the figurine's unusual posture identified with the *āsanas* of classical Indian Yoga.

Not that there is any need to get excited. We know too little of the Harappan religion and there are marked discrepancies between the presentation of the seals and the image of Śiva which emerges in later Hinduism. Similarities do not necessarily mean identity and, therefore, Prof. Filliozat rightly warns us not to interpret all the details of the objects excavated in the Indus cities as precursors of features of the classical or modern Indian religion and culture. The seated posture of the "Proto-Śiva" is, in fact,

[36]) On two seals a sprig of flowers or leaves rises from the head between the horns of the figure.
An elaborate discussion of these finds was presented by D. D. Kosambi, *The Study of Ancient Indian Tradition*. Indica, The Indian Historical Research Institute Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume. Bombay 1953, p. 206 foll.

the ordinary sitting position of the Indians and there are no grounds for supposing that he was engaged in the practice of Yoga.[37]) There is equally little reason to connect this deity with the phallic worship of the Harappan period.

Nevertheless, the existence of phallic worship in the Indus civilization has been firmly established, and so we come to the self-evident question, *viz.* to what extent does the cult of *liṅga* imply erotic tendencies? The answer is not as simple as it seems at first sight.

The fertility cults are often accompanied by sexual rites, which will be dealt with later. It is quite obvious that the organs of generation have an important function within these cults as objects of veneration and ritual manipulations. It was a sad privilege of the Victorianism to ridicule such rites as obscene and to wag a censorious finger at them. Unfortunately, such an approach has not altogether died out even in our enlightened age.

The *liṅga* was, and still is, the commonest symbol of fertility and creative power and the Indians are strongly opposed to any suggestion of obscenity. Their indignation is fully justified by historical reasons, among other things: no religious sect whose teaching and practice imply any such tendencies derived their inspiration from phallic worship. The suggestion made by some psychiatrists (to me personally) that the veneration of *liṅga* and *yoni* bears a marked homosexual tendency, seems to be based on a misunderstanding of the whole problem rather than on any evidence.

On the other hand, we cannot and should not completely eliminate the erotic implication. The rites of washing, adorning and worshipping the stylized male member, which are performed throughout centuries predominantly by women, must exercise perceptible effects on the subconscious approach towards the whole sexual sphere. They need not be deteriorating effects, in any case. Here, we are treading on thin ice, but we cannot avoid the issue.

The *liṅga* of Śiva is, after all, a replica of the real male member and the word *liṅga* is equally applicable to both. The adoration of the *liṅga* makes it very difficult to regard the male genital as a thing which has to be concealed, averted or abhorred and it leaves no scope for the conception of sexual union as a sinful act.

Even if we generalize by such an assertion, we should not forget that the Indian conception of sexual activities must have been subtly influenced by religious beliefs and practices which are closely connected with the idea of

[37]) Jean Filliozat, *Political History of India*. From "L'Inde classique" trsl. by Philip Spratt. Calcutta 1957, p. 87.

divine procreation, widely spread among all strata of Indian society, as we shall see later. Phallic worship, therefore, can be regarded as a significant factor of indirect influence on the generally accepted ideas of sexual life. At the same time, it could not have had any considerable impact on the development of Indian erotics because, as confirmed by sexuologists, the genital alone cannot be regarded as the instigator of erotic excitement,[38]) especially if it is publicly exposed as an object of religious worship.

[38]) J. Hynie, op. cit., p. 67.
For the problem of *śiśna-devāḥ* in the Vedic period see p. 85—86.

CHAPTER II

ṚGVEDIC PERIOD

1. Introduction

In contrast with the prehistoric Indus civilization, all the following stages of Indian cultural evolution have been recorded in literary documents which represent the only source of our information for a very long period. We have to treat them in their relative historical succession, despite the difficulties arising from the want of definite chronological data in the oldest period of Indian literary history.

All dates ascribed to ancient Indian works are hypothetic and should be used with circumspection. They serve but for rudimentary orientation and nothing else. Many of these works grew up to their present volume in the course of several centuries and, in many cases, we are unable to distinguish older constituents from later accretions. Until now, philological and literary criteria were predominantly employed, but it becomes increasingly evident that the vast difference in ethical, psychological and intellectual notions and valuations between older and younger strata of the same work will have to be taken into account when its age is treated of.[1]) This has been made quite obvious especially in the oldest period of Indian literature with which we now have to deal.

For the time being, anyone who does not wish to spend his lifetime on ancient Indian literary chronology has a wide choice of theories and opinions.

When dealing with literary evidence we have to remember that it seldom reflects the real conditions of social life in the whole complexity of its relations. Most literary works have been written with a definite purpose, sometimes diverting from their declared aims, but almost always

[1]) Peter Peterson, *A Second Selection of Hymns from the Ṛgveda*. Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series, No. LVIII. Bombay ²1922, App. IV., p. CIII.

one-sided if taken at their face value. Our account, based on such material, can be neither exact nor exhaustive. In the pursuit of erotics we have to look more for casual references to sexual life than to full accounts of erotic achievements. The language itself offers tough resistance sometimes. The taboos against speech on matters of sex have grown stronger in the course of centuries and, as a result, a word commonly used in a certain period might be abandoned by the next generation when it acquired a vulgar connotation and, after some time later, its meaning might have been completely forgotten. It is quite possible that we have to look here for the origin of many a *hapax legomenon* in the Vedic literature.

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During the last seventy years or so, many Indologists were in the habit of presenting India as a dream-land of luxury and comfort, almost hermetically sealed off from the outer world, where the ancient sages indulged in transcendent meditations or unbelievable licence, sitting amidst a luxuriant tropical paradise and self-contented in their own phantasies which were imbued with thoughts of complete abnegation as well as spasmodically sensuous eroticism.

We know now that life in the tropics was far from being easy and cheerful in antiquity, but we shall perhaps never get fully rid of the magic invoked by masterly descriptions of Indians being slowly transformed into Hindus under the blazing sun which steadily dried up all their world-constructive abilities, descriptions coming from pen of powerful personalities like Hermann Oldenberg.[2]) Even such scholars of the world like Richard Schmidt did not fully resist the temptation of stressing the contrast of Weltflucht--Weltgenuss as milestones of the Indian dualism.[3])

[2]) Hermann Oldenberg, *Buddha. Sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*. Stuttgart und Berlin [5]1906, p. 12ff. *Die Literatur des alten Indien*. Stuttgart und Berlin 1903, p. 8ff.

Similar conceptions have found their way into many other works, perhaps differently styled, but with the same tendency.

[3]) Richard Schmidt, *Liebe und Ehe im alten und modernen Indien*. Berlin 1904, p. 8.

Richard Schmidt is one of the few Indologists who devoted a lifetime to the study of ancient Indian erotics. Though ridiculed and unjustly attacked by his colleagues, he produced some of the finest specimens of erotic studies, especially in his translation of Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra* (published in several editions by H. Barsdorf in Berlin) and in his *Beiträge zur indischen Erotik* (Lotus-Verlag, Leipzig 1902), which is an unique source-book to the study of erotics in the period of decadence. Despite the fact that his interpretation of Vātsyāyana's sūtras has been (rather uncritically) based on the commentary of Yaśodhara and that some of his works (primarily *Liebe und Ehe*) have been hastily compiled from certain unqualified sources, the harsh criticism and rejection of his works by some of his contemporaries was quite unjustified and the student of erotics may benefit from a careful perusal of his books, though he has to form his own opinion as to some conclusions reached by Schmidt.

As the works of this scholar are concerned almost exclusively with the classical period of ancient Indian erotics, we cannot make use of them in the present volume, if we do not want to outrun the facts.

The works of J. J. Meyer, on the other hand, contain many allusions to the erotic aspects of the Vedic literature (especially his voluminous work *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation*. Zürich/Leipzig 1937), but valuable data have to be carefully separated from a mass of useless analogies offered by modern ethnographical material.

[4]) or "(esoteric) equivalence", a new interpretation given by Louis Renou in *L'Inde classique*, translated in a small volume called *Vedic India*. Calcutta 1957, p. 38. This little book is a remarkable achievement, both in its conciseness and comprehensiveness.

[5]) We shall use the abbreviations introduced by MW, for the sake of uniformity (see the list on p. 119).

Yet a captivating view of the ocean should not lead us to the conclusion that the sea is nothing but salt water. We have to get down to hard facts under the surface to touch and feel for ourselves. The quest virtually starts in the Vedic period.

The oldest Indian literary works are known collectively as the *Veda*, which means "knowledge", *i. e.* "sacred" or "religious knowledge". It consists of different classes of literary products which are considered to be a revelation called *śruti* or "hearing". That means that these texts have been spoken and heard and that the ṛṣis, ancient seers and inspired sages, received them by vision.

For a long time these texts were transmitted orally from generation to generation, even after the art of writing had been known for centuries. It was in the interest of the priests to keep their monopoly of the sacred knowledge which they preserved with meticulous care, and we have sufficient proofs that some of the oldest Vedic songs have remained unaltered for at least 2500 years. There is no doubt that the sacred knowledge thus stood a better chance of being preserved unaltered than by a constant copying and re-copying of manuscripts.

The Veda or Vedic literature consists of three basic types of literary works:

1. the Saṃhitās, "collections" of hymns, prayers, benedictions, spells etc.;
2. the Brāhmaṇas, "explanations of the brāhmans" or priests, lengthy prosaic texts, mostly speculations of a theological character on the practical and symbolical significance of separate sacrificial rites and ceremonies;
3. the Āraṇyakas, "forest texts" together with the Upaniṣads "secret teachings"[4]), mystical texts and reflections on religious and rudimentary philosophical problems, which are partly appended to the Brāhmaṇas and partly recognized as independent works.

There are four different Vedas ascribed to four classes of priests officiating at the sacrifice and, accordingly, four distinct types of works belonging to them. We have four Saṃhitās which originated in different schools of priests and singers, preserved in one or more recensions. They are:

I. The Ṛgveda Saṃhitā (RV.[5])), a collection of verses *(ṛc)*.
II. The Yajurveda Saṃhitā, a collection of sacrificial formulas *(yajus)*.

III. The Sāmaveda Saṃhitā (SV.), a collection of melodies *(sāman)*.

IV. The Atharvaveda Saṃhitā (AV.), a collection of magic formulas *(atharvan)*.

Every Veda has its Saṃhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. So *e.g.* the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, Aitareya Āraṇyaka and Aitareya Upaniṣad belong to the Ṛgvedic school etc.[6])

The Yajurveda exists in several Saṃhitās which are of two types: the "Black" Yajurveda, with several recensions of which the most important are the Taittirīya and Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā (TS. and MS.), contains sacrificial formulas mixed with explanatory prose, while the "White" Yajurveda, best preserved in the Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā (VS.), adds detailed instructions in a separate Brāhmaṇa and is, therefore, regarded as "pure" or free from commentary.

The Sāmaveda is a collection of verses of the Ṛgveda arranged for chanting prayers during the sacrifice and, as such, has no practical value for historical research. The Yajurveda will be dealt with in Chapter V (see p. 103). Our main source of information is preserved in the Ṛgveda and Atharvaveda.

The Ṛgveda Saṃhitā, usually called the Ṛgveda (RV.), is the oldest and most important text of the whole Vedic literature. It was probably composed between 1500 and 1000 B. C.[7]) and it consists of older and later elements. It is a collection of 1028 hymns[8]) arranged in ten Books (maṇḍalas "circles"), with the average of ten

[6]) A tabular summary of all Vedic texts, arranged according to various schools, is available in a number of books. See *e. g.* L. Renou, op. cit., p. 50—1, or Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Die Literaturen Indiens von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Potsdam 1929, new enlarged ed. 1961.

[7]) A vast number of books and learned papers have failed to bring the problem of the age of the Veda nearer to final solution. Some scholars went as far back as the 5th millennium B. C. for the oldest parts of the RV., while others are unwilling to go much beyond 1000 B. C.

The majority of Indologists, however, stick to Max Müller's tentative dating (1200 to 1000 B. C. for the hymns, 1000 to 800 B. C. for the "Brāhmaṇa period" and 800 to 600 B. C. for the rest of the pre-Buddhist texts), which is purely arbitrary and based on ingenious guesses. I am not convinced that this suggestion, made in 1859, "remains justified in principle", as Prof. Renou puts it (l. c., p. 10). I cannot get rid of a vague suspicion that Max Müller's dating has been widely and readily accepted mainly because it is simple and easy to remember!

Anyhow, it is a pity that not enough attention is usually paid to M. Winternitz's careful and elucidating analysis displayed in his, as yet unsurpassed, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I., p. 290—310, where he has convincingly shown that the Ṛgveda, at least, must be studied as a separate work and with greater emphasis on the commencement, not on the compilation of Vedic poetry. As far as the chronology of Vedic literature is concerned, nobody was able or took the pains to bring forward anything better to challenge Winternitz's arguments.

For a comprehensive exposition of these problems see Walther Wüst, *Stilgeschichte und Chronologie des Rgveda*. DMG, Leipzig 1928, and W. Gampert, *Zur Problematik des Alters des Ṛgveda*. ArOr XX (1952), p. 572—583, whose arguments, brought forward in support of Piggott's assumptions against Winternitz, would have to be supplemented by the latest — somewhat controversial — evidence of archaeology itself.

At any rate, the age of the Vedic literature has assumed the character of a pious belief rather than objective knowledge.

[8]) or 1017 hymns, if we discount eleven songs of Book VIII, generally recognized as later additions.

stanzas to each hymn; the shortest hymn has only one stanza, while the longest has fifty eight. On calculation, the bulk of the RV. is equivalent to the extant poems of Homer.[9])

It is generally recognized that the majority of the oldest hymns are contained in Books II to VII, ascribed by tradition to different families of singers. A fairly high age is also accorded to Books VIII and IX, while the hymns found in Books I and X are composed of different elements, some of them being regarded as younger additions. That does not mean, of course, that all these hymns are later in origin. In the tenth Book we find many words and grammatical forms which grew obsolete, side by side with new emerging expressions, and we can recognize the later age of these books only as far as their final arrangement in the Saṃhitās is concerned. In fact, although we know the names of the sages to whom the tradition ascribes the composition of the hymns,[10]) the authorship of the Ṛgveda as well as of the other Vedic texts presents considerable problems. There is a striking difference between the time of the compos tion, compilation and final codification of the Ṛgveda Saṃhitā and we shall have tio be content with the assertion that the bulk of our information regarding sexua life in the Ṛgvedic period comes from the second half of the second millennium B. C. The same holds good for the age of the Atharvaveda, which was compiled later than the Ṛgveda, but contains many elements which are at least as old as those of the RV.

The Ṛgveda is an anthology of songs and poems compiled for literary, not liturgical purposes. It contains diversified elements of poetry, mythology, religious beliefs, magic and, first of all, invocations or songs of praise to various gods. They represent only fragments of an immense cultural lore which combined popular religion with priestly cults, codified and used later on for sacrificial purposes.

The Atharvaveda (AV.), on the other hand, is a collection of 731 hymns arranged in twenty books, of which the last two are supplements, the last one being a late addition. About one-seventh of the AV. hymns comes from the RV., mostly in Books X, I and VIII. It is basically a collection of popular rites and magical prayers, preserved for a long time outside the Vedic sacrificial cult and only at a late period, and with certain reservations, recognized as an integral part of the Veda.

The language and metres of the AV. are essentially the same as those of the RV. and some of the hymns may have come from an even older period but, taken as a whole, the preserved text reflects later geographical and social conditions than the RV. As far as the study of erotics is concerned, the Atharvaveda contains many important allusions to sexual life in the form of various love charms, curses laid on rivals and marriage rites which reveal certain information about the intimate life of the Vedic people.

We shall deal with the hymns of the Ṛgveda and Atharvaveda as parallel documents, notwithstanding their marked differences in age, style and purpose.[11]) We

[9]) Arthur Anthony Macdonell, *A Vedic Reader*. London 1917 (fifth Indian impression 1960), p. XIII.

[10]) some women's names can be found among them.

[11]) For a detailed study of the AV. see M. Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda*. Strassbourg 1899 (Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde, II. B., 1. H.).

Some of the variants of RV. stanzas found in the AV. are due to the defective state in which the AV. text has been transmitted, while other deviations are authentic. "and reveal attempts to adapt the ancient formulae to new purposes". L. Renou, op. cit., p. 20.

may regard them, as Bernfried Schlerath has recently demonstrated,[12]) as a synchronic unity, if we want to present a cultural phenomenon against the background of a basically common picture of the world and society.

We do not by far understand everything contained in the Vedic Saṃhitās and anyone who tries to translate everything in the hymns gravely misleads his readers by inducing the belief that they are often unpoetical or senseless. There are many passages whose real meaning is still highly doubtful and many hints of myths and occurences which have not been recorded in later sources. Already in early times the Indian scholars themselves did not understand everything and were engaged in the interpretation of such obscure passages in special works like the Nighaṇṭus, "glossaries" of rare and unintelligible words, Anukramaṇīs, "indexes" of legends, myths and other auxiliary material, and finally commentaries, of which we possess the only comprehensive work of Sāyaṇa from the 14th century A. D.

All these sources can be used only after other means have been exhausted or other criteria have failed to produce the desired effect and, even then, we shall derive only sporadic benefit from their explanations. Sāyaṇa's commentary on the Atharvaveda is especially liable to failures caused by the character of the AV. text which was, over long centuries, lacking in authoritative recognition and careful preservation.

Consequently, under the "Ṛgvedic period" we understand the time of the compilation of RV. and AV. hymns which provide us with the oldest literary evidence on the life and cultural achievements of ancient Indian society.

The Vedic literature, on the whole, represents exclusive literary evidence of certain, not yet fully identified strata of Indian society.[13]) Since the religious character of the Vedic hymns and their ritual employment in later times did not completely eliminate the original colouring of some of the Vedic compositions, we can still draw valuable information on certain salient features of sexual life at the alleged period and, with their help, try to establish the character of the earliest known Indian erotics.

We do not know anything positive about the authors of the RV. hymns, but it is interesting to note, that the poems containing various erotic themes and allusions are not distributed all over the ten Books of the RV. proportionately. With several unimportant exceptions, the second and

[12]) Bernfried Schlerath, *Das Königtum im Rig- und Atharvaveda.* Abh. f. d. Kunde d. Morgenl. XXXIII (DMG), Wiesbaden 1960, p. 161.

[13]) The provenience of various families of Vedic bards remains obscure. They were probably priest-bards attached to kings or tribal chieftains and we may, perhaps, see in them the intellectual aristocracy of those times. That the brāhmans, as we know them from later sources, were not the authors of the RV., is almost as certain as that only fragments of these times' literary production were preserved by tradition. Cf. J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. I. London ²1872, p. 265ff., and V. I. I, p. 150.

But even though the names of the Vedic singers are in many cases nothing else but clumsy fabrications of later commentators, quite often they may have been based on some historical tradition. A careful reader of the RV. will soon discover unmistakable traits of different personalities behind those labels. Individual features are, for example, easily traceable in the hymns ascribed to the seer Vasiṣṭha.

the sixth Books are practically void of sexual motives. This is a striking feature especially of Book II, a little collection of poems comprising some of the finest work of Vedic singers. It remains to be decided whether this circumstance was caused by any conscious internal agency (such as certain families of bards, place or date of origin), or by casual arrangement of the hymns by later indifferent authorities.

To presume, however, that the Vedic literature is, on the whole, poor in erotic elements[14]), is a remarkably mild understatement. They are often concealed in ambiguous riddles, paradoxes and metaphors and sometimes they are based on certain historical or personal allusions that can have been misunderstood or elaborated on by later authors without the knowledge of their real significance[15]), and as such will remain unexplained. But the main bulk of erotic motives can be identified and examined with a great deal of certainty.

2. Religion

Natural phenomena as well as sacrificial procedures are often described in terms of sexual activities. A number of cosmogonic hymns are virtually imbued with erotic allusions, most of which cannot be explained on purely religious or mythological grounds. Many of them are difficult to explain fully as their real meaning became obscure in later times when the myths underlying them had fallen into oblivion.

It must be stressed, nevertheless, that the Vedic "religion" cannot be understood in our sense of the term. Religious beliefs and ideas formed an integral part of the ancient world view and had no separate existence in the minds of the people. There were no "religious" and "secular" issues before the Vedic poets and they used practically the same words and figures of speech when invoking gods or addressing men. Therefore, we cannot distinguish between 'religious' and 'secular' erotics at such an early date.

[14]) "It would seem that in the exclusively religious literature of the Veda there was hardly any scope for poetry of this type." Sushil Kumar De, *Ancient Indian Erotics and Erotic Literature.* Calcutta 1959, p. 6. I regret I cannot quote from this small but resourceful book more extensively as it is out of my hands at present. In any case, the renowned author, who concentrated his interest on the classical love-poetry and drama, was much too liberal in using such terms like "eroticism, love-poetry" etc. as synonyms.

[15]) Cf. *Vedic Hymns*, trsl. by F. Max Müller. Part I. (SBE Vol. 32.), Oxford 1891, p. 359, and the revealing notes on RV. I 32 by Paul Thieme, *Vorzarathustrisches bei den Zarathustriern und bei Zarathustra.* ZDMG 107 (1957), p. 89.

The scale of natural phenomena in India was bound to provide the main theme for commonly shared hopes and worries within the ancient society whose imagination was peculiarly open to impressions from within. The Indian climate is conspicuously characterized by monsoons or "Rains" which follow after long periods of unbearable, devastating heat. The earth, mercilessly scorched by the burning sun, greedily absorbs the moisture, and a new period of regeneration and life sets in.

All these spectacular phenomena have been faithfully recorded by the ancient spectators who could not fail to be deeply impressed by their influence. In order to reach the desired effect, Ṛgvedic singers applied many terms of sexual significance to such phenomena.

Rain is often spoken of as sperm, seminal fluid *(retaḥ)*[16]) which fertilizes the earth (RV. I 100,3; 128,3 etc.; AV. IV 15,11). Parjanya, the god of rain, is said to deposit the sperm in her like a bull (RV. III 55,17).[17]) He is also called *retodhā* or "begetter" of all plants (RV. VII 101,6; cf. III 56,3; AV. VIII 7,21). He refreshes (or "satisfies") the earth with his sperm.[18])

The act of cosmic production is sometimes described in terms of the sexual intercourse of the father Heaven *(dyauḥ)* with the mother Earth *(pṛthivī)*. She was moist from impregnation *(garbharasā)*[19]) and pierced *(nividdhā)* by him (RV. I 164,8). The idea of their "pairing" or "copulation" has been also expressed by the dual (dvandva, *i.e.* "copulative") compound *dyāvāpṛthivī*, and it is possible that this inspired other pairs of deities to be compounded likewise.

They are said to pour out the seed[20]) and are called "rich in semen" *(bhūriretasā)* or "prolific parents" *(suretasā)*.[21])

Torrential rains and storms deeply impressed the minds of ancient people and found a ready response in their poetic imagination. The authors of the

[15]) The word "seed" is commonly used both for a germ of plants' reproduction, and for a male fecundating fluid or "semen" (eventually offspring, progeny).

[17]) The verb √*dhā*, *ā*-√*dhā* or *ni*-√*dhā* is usually employed in this connection: *kanikradad vṛṣabho jīradānū reto dadhāty oṣadhīṣu garbham*, RV. V 83, 1.

[18]) *parjanyaḥ pṛthivīṃ retasāvati*, RV. V 83,4.
For practical reasons we shall mark the musical accent of Vedic texts only if necessary for the clarification of some term.

[19]) or "moist in her womb (from impregnation)": "versehen mit schwängernder Feuchtigkeit", PW; "von Feuchtigkeit befruchtet", Geldner; "desirous of impregnation", MW; "womb-sapped", Whitney. *sā bībhatsur garbharasā nividdhā*, RV. I 164,8 = AV. IX 9,8.

[20]) *retaḥ* √*sic*, RV. VI 70, 2; see p. 92.
In ancient times, women were generally believed to possess semen as well as men; cf. Meyer II, p. 259, III, p. 182.

[21]) RV. III 3,11; VI 70,1 etc.; AV. VIII 9,12 etc.
Passages to this effect have been collected by J. Muir, OST V, p. 24—9.

hymns availed themselves freely of such terms as were connected with the act of procreation and sometimes they succeeded in creating remarkably plastic images of Nature's regenerative processes. The earth is frequently represented as trembling under the fury of storm (or Maruts, the storm gods). She is struck down and staggering, covered with water and fertilized, but likewise rejoicing *(madantī)* like a woman tilled *(parāhatā)* by her liberal lord *(mīḷhuṣmatī*, RV. V 56,3). The word *parāhatā* has a clearly sexual connotation, similar to other expressions connected with the cultivation of the soil.[22]) Equally, terms denoting moisture were often applied to fertilizing activities and, sooner or later, they were connected with sexual experience. It is important to note that such words as *ṛdū-*,[23]) *rasa-*, *ārdra-*, *sneha-* etc., used in this context, always comprise a predominantly pleasant feeling. When dealing with sexual ideas, it is necessary to stress again and again the importance of the psychological implications of "dry" and "wet" in a hot climate!

There are several allegories and riddles in the RV. which allude to the divine incest of the father Heaven committed with his daughter Uṣas, the Dawn (RV. I 71,5; 164,33[24]). The god bestowed his fury on his own daughter,[25]) while in another hymn both are said to have been fulfilling each other's desire[26]) and it is interesting to note that the father 'covered' his daughter, which is expressed by a verb predominantly used of an animal covering another in copulation[27]). The act itself is described in vivid language: "That male, whose prolific virile member had swelled discharging (semen), now withdrew it, after it had carried out (its work). Again,

[22]) This has been made clear from ŚBr. XI 5,1,1, where *hata-* has been used in combination with the penis (see p. 92); cf. also the use of √*han* in AV. VI 101,1.
mīḷhuṣmatī may also mean "bountiful", *i. e.* yielding plenty.

[23]) K. F. Johansson, *Sanskritische Etymologien*. IF 2 (1893), p. 27—8.
On the term *sneha-* see H. Willman-Grabowska, Rocznik Orjentalistyczny 4 (1926), p. 248—54.

[24]) *pitā duhitur garbham ādhāt*.
It is doubtful whether we can regard RV. III 31,1ff. as another instance of this incest (see Geldner I, p. 366).

[25]) *svāyāṃ devo duhitari tviṣiṃ dhāt*, I 71,5.
The word *tviṣi-* may be conceived here as "impetuousness" or sexual fury excited by the maiden's charms. In fact, it is a term which could have expressed the aggressive excitement in animal rut. In verse 8, *tejas* takes place of *tviṣi*, stressing thus the fiery energy of the excited male. Cf. AV. X 6,27 and the use of *tejas* as "sperm" in later Sanskrit.
Geldner translates "Brunst" in both places.

[26]) *abhīke kāmaṃ kṛṇvāne pitari yuvatyā*, RV. X 61,6. Afterwards they separated from each other *(viyantā)*.

[27]) *adhi*-√*ṣkand*: *svāṃ duhitaram adhiṣkan*, ib. verse 7. Cf. AV. X 10,16 etc. with the meaning 'to cover a cow'.

the irresistible one tears out that which had been injected into (the vulva of) his youthful daughter."[28])

The god Pūṣan is called a lover *(jāra)* of his sister *(i. e.* Uṣas, according to Sāyaṇa, RV. VI 55,4), but he is also a suitor *(didhiṣu)* of his mother (ib., verse 5; cf. I 115,2; X 3,3).[29]) Some other instances of this kind are rather obscure.[30])

Tvaṣṭar's creation is also based on an incest with his daughter, the female principle of creation (RV. V 42,13, where he is called *āhanas* "profligate, lascivious"). [31])

It is quite clear that different points of view have stimulated the seemingly contradictory statements on the origin of various gods. Neither can we deduce much from the instances of the 'divine incest' which have to be regarded as fruits of poetic imagination rather than a real evidence of incestuous tendencies. The problem of divine incest has been dealt with by many scholars. We know that sexual intercourse among near relatives was already prohibited in the Ṛgvedic period[32]) while, on the other hand, the human race was believed to have been produced by Yama, the son of Vivasvant, with his twin sister Yamī (Macdonell p. 15). Anyway, incest as a sexual phenomenon is not very interesting as such. The idea of divine incest plays an important role in the sacrificial ritual (p. 109), but it could in no way substantially influence the sphere of sexual life from the erotic point of view.

The prohibition of promiscuity and incestuous intercourse need not be explained merely on physiological and economic grounds. Abiding traditions of marriages among close relatives in many aristocratic families have

[28]) *prathiṣṭa yasya vīrakarmam iṣṇad anuṣṭhitaṃ nu naryo apauhat/punas tad ā vṛhati yat kanāyā duhitur ā anubhṛtam anarvā*, X 61,5.

[29]) At the marriage ceremonial, Pūṣan was asked to take the bride's hand and lead her away (RV. X 85,26). In another place he is prayed to give his worshippers their share of damsels *(kanyāḥ*, RV. IX 67,10).

[30]) RV. X 61, 5ff.; 145; 159 etc.
The hymn X 162,5 was used for the prevention of abortion and, as such, is filled with magic imagery. "The eventful life of women before, during and after marriage has given rise to many practices and charms which are naturally ignored by the main current of Vedic tradition, the Śrauta-literature, but are fitly embodied in the Atharvan and the Gṛhya-sūtras". M. Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda*, p. 69.

[31]) *ya āhanā duhitur vakṣaṇāsu rūpā mināno akṛṇod idaṃ naḥ.*
Not "zusetzend, drängend, heiss machend", as Geldner translates; cf. Neisser *s.v.*
He is often accompanied by the wives of the gods (RV. I 22, 9 etc.), probably because his creative power is manifested mainly in the wombs of females. Cf. H. Oertel, *Contributions from the Jāiminīya Brāhmaṇa*. Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol. XV. (1909), p. 185 and 188.

[32]) *ajāmi jāmyoḥ sacā*, RV. V 19,4; also X 10,4.
Cf. the articles of Erich Herold in ArOr XXIV (1956), p. 119 and in Charisteria Orientalia Ioanni Rypka, Praha 1956, p. 100—102.

often proved that the fears of biological degeneration have been exaggerated while psychological factors have been almost unanimously overlooked. As far as the ancient matriarchal phase is concerned, it is quite understandable that the original exchange of partners must have led to undesirable rivalry and friction within the same group and that it was in the interest of the parties concerned to delineate sexual relations within the community in order to safeguard the family as a unit and to prevent its social (not moral) deterioration. Incestuous tendencies, on the other hand, can be found in all developed civilizations as a pathological, not historical phenomenon.

The Vedic gods are mostly anthropomorfic. The goddesses play only a minor role in the sacrificial cult, a role which fully corresponds to the part played by their earthly counterparts. The gods are, on the whole, a true copy of their worshippers, both in their behaviour and morals. They are also frequently endowed with sexual qualities peculiar to mortals. "In the beginning, the gods lay down with their spouses; they brought their bodies into full contact with (their wives') bodies."[33]) The verb *saṃ-√spṛś*, which has been employed here, actually means "to contact" something, with predominant feeling of touch. The sense of bodily contact during intercourse is borne out by the phrase "bring into full contact your body with (your) husband"[34]) which Whitney translates "mingle thyself with thy husband".

Agni, the fire-god and the chief terrestrial deity, is very closely connected with human life, as he dwells in every abode and is on intimate terms with its inhabitants. He represents the procreative power and is, therefore, the lover of maidens, the husband of wives.[35]) He is called Aryaman in secrecy by maidens for whom he provides men; he unites husband and wife *(dampatī*, RV. V 3,2). He rouses the parents *(pitarāḥ)*; like a lover *(jāra)* he excites amorous pleasure *(bhagam*, RV. X 11,6). He had overpowered Night and begotten Uṣas with her (X 3,2). His virility is demonstrated by the attribute "the thousand testicled one" *(sahasramuṣka*, RV. VIII 19,32) like Indra (VI 46,3); he abounds in seed (IV 5,3).

Agni is also represented as the instigator of divine incest, because he had stimulated father Heaven's desire (RV. I 71,5). He incites men and especi-

[33]) *devā agre nyapadyanta patnīḥ; samaspṛśanta tanvas tanūbhiḥ*, AV. XIV 2,32. Whitney translates "they embraced bodies with bodies". However, the verb *saṃ-√spṛś* does not mean' 'to embrace", except in the sense of the German term "Liebesumarmung" which the English word does not necessarily imply.

[34]) *patyā tanvaṃ saṃ spṛśasva*, AV. XIV 1,40.

[35]) *jāraḥ kanīnām patir janīnām*, RV. I 66,8. Cf. ŚBr. III 4,3,5; TS. II 1,2,7—8; II 2,4,4; I 5,9,1.

ally women to sexual desire and is, therefore, also called *Kāma* or Desire (AV. III 21,4; cf. SV. II 8,2,19,3). He is called the paramour *(jāra)* of his sister Uṣas, the daughter of the great father Heaven in RV. X 3,3 where the singer skillfully identifies him with Sūrya, the sun god, throughout the song.

We cannot dwell on the contradictory identifications of various gods which have been sufficiently explained by Vedic scholars. The question of incestuous activities is, to my mind, more of a poetic or literary character, but we can observe that the most important feature in these passages is the idea of "pairing" or perfect union of Nature's phenomena for which the Vedic poet found the most adequate expression in terms of copulation or sexual union. Sexual terminology as the means of poetic embellishment is one of the striking phenomena of Vedic poetry and we can quote many examples where the idea of copulation or sexual penetration was chosen as the most appropriate expression for various processes observed in the world around.

The production of the sacrificial fire by the friction of the two fire-sticks was identified with the performance of sexual intercourse, the upper stick being spoken of as the male organ *(prajanana)*, the lower stick *(araṇi)* as the woman spread out *(uttānā)* under the man. RV. III 29,1 foll. offers such a description (in Muir's translation): 1. "This process of friction, of generation, has begun; bring this mistress of the people (the lower *araṇi*); let us rub out Agni as heretofore. 2. This god is deposited in the two pieces of wood, as the embryo in pregnant women. Agni is daily to be lauded by men bringing oblations and awaking (early). 3. Skilled (in the process), bring (the upper piece of wood) into contact with the lower, lying recumbent: being impregnated, she speedily brings forth the vigorous (Agni)." (OST V 209—210).[36])

Several gods are connected with women and various procreative activities in view of their fertilizing or generative functions. Tvaṣṭar is often allied with celestial females *(gnāḥ, janayaḥ, devānāṃ patnīḥ)* (RV. I 22,9; VII 35,6; I 161,4; cf. TS. VI 5,8,4 and JaimBr. II 155,2). Whereas Tvaṣṭar forms the embryo in the womb, the god Viṣṇu fertilizes the womb. We are

[36]) 1. *astīdam adhimanthanam asti prajananaṃ kṛtam/*
etāṃ viśpatnīm ā bharāgnim manthāma pūrvathā.
2. *araṇyor nihito jātavedā garbha iva sudhito garbhiṇīṣu/*
dive-diva īḍyo jāgṛvadbhir haviṣmadbhir manuṣyebhir agniḥ.
3. *uttānāyām ava bharā cikitvān sadyaḥ pravītā vṛṣaṇaṃ jajāna/*
aruṣaślīpo ruśad asya pāja iḷāyās putro vayune 'janiṣṭa.
Cf. VS. XXXIV 14. For similar metaphors with erotic connotation see RV. I 140; 141, 1—5; 145,4.

told in RV. X 184,1 (=AV. V 25,5) that Viṣṇu prepares the womb, Tvaṣṭar adorns the forms, Prajāpati pours on and Dhātar places the embryo.[37]) Viṣṇu helps the young pregnant women *(yuvatayo janitrīḥ*, RV. III 54,14) and protects the infused sperm *(niṣiktapā*, VII 36,9; cf. 100,4). He leads both parents (*mātarā, i. e.* Heaven and Earth) to the enjoyment of sperm;[38]) he causes the pairs (?) to move (or shake) like a rolling wheel.[39]) Viṣṇu is also called *akumāraḥ* "no more a boy", *i. e.* a youth who is not without sexual experience.[40]) The word is found only in this place, but its sense can be made out without difficulty, as it is used in a compound *yúvākumāraḥ* "one who is young, but no more a (chaste) youth".[41])

Viṣṇu's connection with sexual activities has not yet been fully explored and it would be certainly interesting to trace the development of these ideas from the Vedic period to later times, when he plays a prominent role in erotic cults, some of which were combined with aboriginal rites and beliefs.

Sūrya, the sun god and the most concrete solar deity, is the lover of Uṣas, the Dawn. He is said to follow her as a young man *(marya)* follows a girl (RV. I 115,2). He follows her track (V 81,2) but, seen from a different angle, Uṣas is said to be his wife *(yoṣā*, RV. VII 75,5), or even to have produced him (VII 78,3). Agni plays the same role in other passages, when the sacrificial fire was kindled at dawn.

Uṣas, the goddess of Dawn, is the only Ṛgvedic deity endowed with avowed erotic attributes. In fact, she is the only goddess who has a paramour (see Ved. Stud. I 30,196) and her descriptions reveal that she was the prototype of a courtesan (see p. 83). She is said to be longing for a lover *(jārayantī*,[42]) RV. I 124, 10 etc.). She arrays herself in gay attire like

[37]) *viṣṇur yoniṃ kalpayatu tvaṣṭā rūpāṇi piṃśatu/*
ā siñcatu prajāpatir dhātā garbhaṃ dadhātu te.
[38]) *ni mātarā nayati retase bhuje*, RV. I 155,3.
Has the choice of the dual form of *mātr-* any relation to the enjoyment of sperm, which can be better associated with the female partner?
For the use of *bhuje* see Petr Sgall, *Die Infinitive im Ṛgveda.* Acta Universitatis Carolinae — Philologica No. 2. (1958), p. 206ff.
[39]) *cakraṃ na vṛttaṃ vyatīṁr avīvipat*, ib. verse 6.
[40]) RV. I 155,6. Grassmann and MW apply it to Indra.
[41]) Geldner (I, p. 214 note) suggests that the word hints at Viṣṇu's dwarfish figure — he probably means as a contrast to the term *bṛhaccharīraḥ*.. "who has a vast body", because the Viṣṇu legend often combines his appearance as a giant with that of a dwarf. Here, however, the compound with *yúvā* speaks more in favour of the interpretation suggested above. Cf. also the use of *akanyā* in later Sanskrit.
[42]) See P. v. Bradke, *Zwei sprachgeschichtliche Skizzen.* IF 4 (1894), p. 90—1. But Geldner and Oldenberg translate "wach machend".

a dancer *(nṛtū)* and displays her breasts.[43]) She is lecherous *(odatī*,[44]) RV. I 48,6), lit. 'moist' or 'wet' and in this sense 'longing, in love' or better "rutting, on heat". An ambivalent epithet *subhagā* is often used when speaking about her (RV. I 92,8; 113,7; III 61,4 etc.). It means "graceful or blessed" but, at the same time, it may mean "who has beautiful pudenda" *(bhaga)*.[45]) Uṣas is also called "a laughing one" *(hasrā)* like a girl who agrees by her provoking smile to a man's summons, which is the Vedic equivalent of a courtesan or concubine (RV. I 124,7). And in RV. VII 80,2 she is directly called "a shameless maiden" *(yuvatir ahrayāṇā;* see Ved. Stud. I 196-7).

Soma, the divinised sacrificial plant and the intoxicating beverage prepared from it by a special process of pressing, had a prominent place in the Vedic sacrificial cult; his Aryan origin is stressed several times. The nature of its preparation as well as the drinking of the soma juice and its invigorating effect offered ample opportunity to introduce manifold allegories and riddles the ambiguity of which is as evident as obscure.

Many hymns of the ninth Book, which is fully dedicated to the cult of Soma pavamāna, are concerned with the raising of procreative potency (RV. IX 30,3; 60,4; 62,23 etc.) or with prayers for destroying the potency of an enemy (IX 19,7). Soma is compared to a bellowing bull and the milk with which it is mixed to cows and again, allusions are made here to a cow and a young, adorned woman *(yoṣā)* at the same time (IX 96,24) coming to her lord (*pati*, IX 97,22 etc.). The sacrificial procedure at the preparation of the soma drink is overladen with varied erotic imagery. Soma, when mixed with water and milk, is spoken of as a bull who unites with cows (IX 6,6) who yearn after him like a young woman after her dear lover

[43]) *adhi peśāṃsi vapate nṛtūr ivāporṇute vakṣa*, RV. I 92,4. Cf. *saṃsmayamānā yuvatiḥ purastād āvir vakṣāṃsi kṛṇuṣe vibhātī*, RV. I 123,10; VI 64,2; *upo adarśi śundhyuvo na vakṣaḥ*, RV. I 124,4.

[44]) "sprinkling or refreshing" (MW), but probably connected with *odma* flooding (see Mayrhofer, *s. v.*); "geil", Pischel. Cf. *nadaṃ va odatīnāṃ nadaṃ yoyuvatīnām (dhenūnām)*, RV. VIII 69,2.

[45]) cf. RV. X 75,8 where the river Sindhu and the surrounding region is compared to a beautifully adorned young woman *(yuvatiḥ)*, full of blessings *(subhagā)*.

Neither pw nor MW register the erotic connotation which is quite commonly applied to this term. The original idea "having good fortune" may imply sexual attractions in AV. II 36,3 *(somo hi rājā subhagāṃ kṛṇoti)*, and in RV. X 85,25 = AV. XIV 1,18 *(yatheyam... suputrā subhagāsati* "that she may be rich in sons, graceful"; Whitney offers a vague term "wellportioned").

The word *bhaga-* is used in the sense of "genitals" *e. g.* in AV. II 30,2 *saṃ vāṃ bhagāso agmata* "the genitals of you two have come together". At other places it has the meaning of "sexual enjoyment, amorous pleasure": *ud īraya pitarā jāra ā bhagam*, RV. X 11,6; *bhagaḥ saubhāgyaṃ pasaḥ*, VS. XX 9. Cf. RV. II 17,7 and X 39,3 (where *bhaga-* is prayed for by an *amājur-)*.

(IX 32,5; 56,3). He unites with them as with women who have beautiful genitals (*sūpasthā*, IX 61,21). He goes unremittingly through the strainer and approaches the cows; he unites with the two fingers of the priest who prepares him (IX 72,3[46])).

The poet who praises Soma in hyperbolical terms and unexpected figures of speech, is satisfied with his own skill; he is as skilled as a male who inserts his sperm into a female animal.[47]) Soma is often said to copulate *(nasate)* with the "sisters" *(jāmi)*[48]), *viz.* the fingers of the priest who presses the plant (IX 68,4) which are also known as "ten young women" *(daśa yoṣaṇaḥ)* who are sisters (IX 1,7; 6,5 etc.). Sometimes there is an open talk of sexual intercourse (IX 69,3; cf. X 101,12 with strong terms about the preparation of the penis, see p. 97).

The two parts of the hand-press for extracting the soma are formed like the two labia of female genitals (*jaghanādhiṣavaṇyā*, RV. I 28,2) and the pressing itself resembles a woman who practises the shaking to and fro, *i. e.* during cohabitation.[49])

The god Indra becomes exhilarated by large libations of soma juice, which are frequently described as stimulating his warlike dispositions and energies. Sometimes he is said to have fulfilled some of his greatest feats under the influence of the soma juice (II 15,2; VIII 36,4 etc.). But also other gods eagerly hasten to partake of this beverage. "The gods get drunk, as it were, at the mid-day libation, and are then consequently at the third libation in a state of complete drunkenness." [50]) The effects of the soma

[46]) *aramamāṇo aty eti gā abhi sūryasya priyaṃ duhitus tiro ravam/anv asmai joṣam abharad vinaṃgṛsaḥ saṃ dvayībhiḥ svasṛbhiḥ kṣeti jāmibhiḥ.*

"Ohne zu rasten geht er durch (die Seihe) auf die Kühe (die Mischmilk) los; er über(tönt) den lieben Schall von Sūrya's Tochter (the songs of the priests). Den Arm steckte sie ihm nach Lust hinein; den beiderseitigen verwandten Schwestern (den Fingern) wohnt er bei", Geldner.

A lascivious metaphor might have been employed here. The verb *anu-√bhṛ* has been used in the sense "to introduce, insert, inject" (the penis) several times: *yat kanāyā duhitur ā anubhṛtam* "what has been injected into (the vulva of) his youthful daughter", RV. X 61,5; *bṛhac chepo'nu bhūmau jabhāra* "he has inserted a big penis into the earth", AV. XI 5,12.

[47]) *paśau na reta ādadhat*, RV. IX 99,6.

[48]) The difficult problem of the real meaning of *jāmi* has been tackled anew by A. C. Banerjea, *Studies in the Brāhmaṇas*. Delhi 1963, p. 20—31.

[49]) *yatra nāry apacyavam upacyavaṃ ca śikṣate*, ib. verse 3. The phrase *apacyavam upacyavaṃ √śikṣ* "to practise the shaking to and fro" (during copulation) has been used only in this place. Cf. Neisser, *s. v.*

Geldner translates *jaghanādhiṣavaṇyā* "zwei Schamteile" which is not quite clear to me. Cf. J. Gonda, *Remarks on Similes in Sanskrit Literature*. Leiden 1949, p. 70. About *adhiṣavaṇa-* see V. I. I, p. 20.

[50]) Haug's translation of AitBr. VI 11: *mādyanti iva vai madhyandine devatāḥ sam eva tṛtīya-savane mādyante*. OST V, p. 88, note 168.

beverage drunk by the worshippers themselves are also occasionally described (RV. VI 47,3; VIII 48,3).

In spite of its exhilarating and invigorating effect which prompted Indra to slay all foes and to countless other heroic deeds, it seems that the drinking of soma was not directly connected with the stimulation of erotic propensities except, perhaps, sexual vigour which is expressed in the wish that Soma should grant the worshippers excellent children, a feature shared by Haoma, its Avestan counterpart.[51])

Taittirīya Saṃhitā (II 3,5,1) relates the love adventures of Soma with the thirty three daughters of Prajāpati who became his wives, and how he frequented only Rohiṇī, one of them, and was seized with consumption as a punishment for his neglect of the rest. Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (II 3,10,1 foll.) contains another of Soma's love stories. The tale serves to explain why women always ask for some gift as a price of their submission in sexual intercourse.[52])

Most of the similes with a strong erotic connotation were employed in the ritual and certainly did not purport to arouse any erotic stimulation in the listeners among whom, it has to be noted, were also women. Besides, they must be seen with the eyes of the poet who did his best to win the favour of his "employer", *i. e.* the worshipper for whose benefit the sacrifice or libation was performed, by inventing ingenious devices that would produce an unexpected effect. It seems, moreover, that he was either enjoying himself or amusing his hosts with a particular sense of humour which we sometimes fail to share.

One of the striking features of the Ṛgvedic "humour" is the deliberate choice of words with double meanings which remained in vogue until the classical period of Sanskrit poetry. The use of such words as *menā*, *mātṛ goḥ* etc. is very often ambivalent and we have to decide in each separate instance whether human or animal female is meant thereby (see Ved. Stud. II 316 ff.). For example, the word *vrā* which has a hidden meaning of "a rutting female" (see p. 76) can symbolize the songs that entice the benefactor, but also additions to milk at the soma pressing, both of which share a common bed with Soma (RV. X 123,2; cf. 10,7 etc.). In such cases the decision is almost impossible.

[51]) A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*. Strassburg 1897, p. 114. (Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde, III. Band, 1. Heft A.).
About the phrase *somasya made* "in the exhilaration caused by Soma" see A. Venkatasubbiah, ZDMG 115 (1965), p. 132.

[52]) OST V, p. 264—5.
The psychology of sexual life, which found a fertile soil in India, began to develop only towards the close of the Vedic period, but even here we meet some fine psychological observations.

There are several passages in the RV. and AV. from which we may get a better idea of the kind of humour which was prevalent among the assembled sacrificers and the rest of the participants. In the fourth verse of the well-known satire of RV. IX 112, which could have been a "popular" song sung during the preparation of the soma juice, we read that every man and animal has his own pleasures: "The draught horse wants a light carriage, the seducers a (woman's) laugh, the penis a hairy pudendum and the frogs a pond."[53]) Now, the phrase *śepo romaṇvantau bhedau ichati* is practically untraslatable into English or any other European language.[54]) Some English translators omit the phrase completely.[55]) It means literally: "the penis desires the two gaping labia (of the female genitals) covered with hair." The word *bhedaḥ*, which means a (gaping) cleft or fissure, is used in the dual here to denote the two labia parted asunder. It may be a colloquialism of some kind or it may be an ingenious play on words which we have to render by means of inadequate Latin substitutes and thus to spoil the whole effect. A gay refrain repeated after each stanza heightens the mockery of the hymn.

There is a similarly tuned song in AV. IV 34 which extolls a certain rice-mess offering. The second verse of the hymn speaks about the performers of this sacrifice who go to a bright world *(śuciṃ lokam)*: "Jātavedas (*i. e.* the fire of the funeral pile) burns not away their virile member *(śiśna)*; in the heavenly worlds much women-folk is theirs *(bahu straiṇam eṣām;* Whitney's translation). The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa explains: "When a man, knowing this, practises austere fervour, he retains in heaven all his functions, even to that of sexual intercourse."[56]) And at another place the same text asserts that the enjoyments of the Fathers are a hundred times greater than those of a man who lives in perfect prosperity, is the lord of others, and enjoys all human pleasures.[57]) Cf. KaṭhUp. I 1,25 where the god Yama describes to Naciketas the divine pleasures with the Apsarases, the celestial nymphs.[58])

[53]) *aśvo voḷhā sukhaṃ ratham hasanām upamantriṇaḥ/*
śepo romaṇvantau bhedau vār in maṇḍūka ichatīndrāyendo pari srava.

[54]) J. Muir translates: "the female sex (desires) the male". OST V, p. 424.

[55]) *Vedic Hymns*, trsl. by Edward J. Thomas. London 1923, p. 80. A. Hillebrandt translates *hirsutam rimam mentula* in the middle of a German rendering. See *Lieder des Ṛgveda*. Göttingen-Leipzig 1913, p. 39.

[56]) OST V, p. 307, note 463.

[57]) ŚBr. XIV 7,1,32 ff.

[58]) "Whatever desires are hard to attain in this world of mortals, ask for all those desires at thy will. Here are noble maidens with chariots and musical instruments: the like of them cannot be won by men": *ye ye kāmā durlabhā martya-loke sarvān kāmāṃś chandataḥ prārthayasva/imā rāmāḥ sarathāḥ satūryā na hīdṛśā lambhanīyā manuṣyaiḥ.* S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads*. London 1953, p. 605.

The enjoyments of a future life, conferred by the god Soma, include pleasures and gratification of the senses (RV. IX 113,11). The words *ānandāḥ*, *modāḥ* and *pramudaḥ* which are used here, denote the sexual gratification in other texts, too.[59]) Divine sexual pleasures were promised to worshippers who installed various sacrifices and oblations.[60]) H. Zimmer, J. Muir and other scholars collected further evidence from the RV. and the Brāhmaṇas in order to show that sexual pleasure was being promised to the departing mortals.[61])

We may note by passing that the heavenly bliss comprised the idea of a perfect body, free from distortions (AV. VI 120,3), and a state in which the objects of desire *(kāmasya kāmāḥ)* were attained (RV. IX 113,11).

The Gandharvas, a class of demi-gods and later on predominantly celestial singers, share the sensuous delights of celestials as well as departed and living mortals. In AV. IV 37,11 they are described as hairy, like dogs and monkeys, but assuming a handsome appearance to seduce the affections of earthly females (see p. 69).

The god Indra, who is placed in the first rank among the Vedic gods, is the most spectacular figure of the Ṛgvedic pantheon with regard to sexual motives. As a warrior-god he is more developed on the physical side than in his intellectual attainments. As an exuberant eater and drinker of the soma juice he was, obviously, not a refined lover owing to other passions he had to attend to. But once he was roused to the amorous excitement, his virile bull-like aggressiveness became very much obvious to the lady in question. In fact, Indra is the most human and delightful ancient Indian god, both in his Herculean glory and regretfully human weaknesses.

The poets knew perfectly well that he was unable to resist their tempting invitations to come and take his share of soma. He is presented as being clasped by the ardent hymns of his votaries like a husband is embraced by his loving wives (RV. I 62,11; 186,7; X 43,1). He approaches soma like a pigeon his hen (RV. I 30,4) or like a stallion his mare (I 56,1).

[59]) Cf. TBr. II 4,6,5 ff.:
prajāpatiḥ striyām yaśo muṣkayor adadhāt sapam /
kāmasya ṛptim ānandaṃ tasyāgne bhājayeha mā /
modaḥ pramoda ānando muṣkayor nihitaḥ sapaḥ /
sṛṣveva kāmasya ṛpyāni dakṣiṇānām pratigrahe.
Cf. the use of *pramud-* (f.) "sexual gratification" in RV. IX 113,11 (obtainable in heaven), and X 10,12.

[60]) Cf. AV. IV 34,4: "Yama does not steal away the generative power of those who cook the viṣṭārin oblation" (Whitney); *viṣṭāriṇam odanaṃ ye pacanti nainān yamaḥ pari muṣṇāti retaḥ.*

[61]) Heinrich Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben.* Berlin 1879, p. 413 ff.; OST V, p. 314 ff.; A. A. Macdonell, Ved. Myth., p. 168; Charles Rockwell Lanman, *A Sanskrit Reader.* Cambridge (Mass.) 1927, p. 379—80.

He comes drunk with soma to his dear wife *(jāyā)* and continues his heroic bout with her (RV. I 82,5). In several hymns his wife is called Indrāṇī and in the famous Vṛṣākapi Hymn (RV. X 86) she takes a conspicuous part. We have also a portentuous description of her sexual charms in the Brāhmaṇas.[62]) Elsewhere she is called Indra's beloved wife who has a fanciful head-dress (lit. "of all forms")[63]) which reminds us of the fanciful head-dresses of the figurines of the supposed goddesses found in the Indus civilization. A wife called Prāsahā is mentioned in another text as Indra's favourite wife *(vāvātā)*.[64])

Indra falls in love with every pretty woman upon whom he lays his stately eye. He cures Apālā, the daughter of Atri, of a skin disease, but only after she agrees to cohabit with him (RV. VIII 91).[65]) In AV. VII 38,2 he is said to have been drawn down from among the gods by an Asura female *(āsurī)*. In another passage (Kāṭhaka 13,5) we are told that Indra was enamoured of a Dānavī called Vilisteṅgā and that he lived among the Asuras, taking a form of a female when among females, of a male when among males.[66]) With some other gods he is frequently called *vṛṣan* or *vṛṣabha*, which is a common designation of a potent male.[67]) He gives wives to those who have none (RV. V 31,2; IV 17,16).

Many of Indra's love adventures are not very clear in the Ṛgveda; so *e. g.* the allusion to his transformation into a woman or his slaying of the two wives of the demon Kuyava (RV. I 104,3; V 30,9 etc.; see Geldner I 64 note). Most of these myths have been irretrievably lost, while some can be reconstructed from later sources. The Brāhmaṇas hint at some of them. For example, in KauṣBr. (XXIII 4) there is a curious love scene between Indra and demoness. "An Asura woman approached Indra making *muṣkas* at every joint; Indra desirous of subduing her, at every joint made *śepas;* Indra indeed is Parucchepa ('having in joints *śepas*'); all does Indra seek to conquer. With her he had union; with him was she angry with the cunning of the Asuras; he saw these (verses) with repeated Padas; with them from

[62]) *indrāṇī devī subhagā supatnī ud aṃśena patividye jigāya /*
triṃśad asyāḥ jaghanaṃ yojanāni / upastha indraṃ sthaviraṃ bibharti, TBr. II 4,2,7.

[63]) *indrāṇī ha vai indrasya priyā patnī / tasyāḥ uṣṇīṣe viśvarūpatamaḥ*, ŚBr. XIV 2,1,8.

[64]) *iyaṃ vā indrasya priyā jāyā vāvātā prāsahā nāma*, AitBr. III 22,1.

[65]) The story, however, has to be reconstructed from later sources. For a detailed treatment see Meyer III, p. 167 ff.

[66]) *indro vai vilisteṅgāṃ dānavīm akāmayata / so 'sureṣv acarat strī eva strīṣu bhavan pumān puṃsu.*

[67]) About the significance of this term by gods see B. Schlerath, op. cit., p. 50. Indra is also called *sahasramuṣka-* "a thousand-testicled one" (RV. VI 46,3).

every limb, from every joint, from all evil was he set free."[68]) The story serves to explain a certain ritual and the listener was supposed to know the details.

Indra's incontinence and adultery became proverbial in later mythology, which is best illustrated by his seduction of Ahalyā, the wife of Gautama, for which he is often spoken of as 'the lover of Ahalyā' *(ahalyā-jāra)*. In this myth the curse of the enraged sage impressed upon him a thousand marks resembling female genitals and he was therefore called *sayoni*. A systematic study of Indra's erotic personality might reveal many interesting facts and connections. In the Purāṇic narratives, for example, he often plays an amusing role and the authors' treatment of him seems to verge on familiarity and something very much akin to humour. In the Buddhist records, Indra was often made a laughing-stock. Similarly, the ballad of Indra's peculiar birth (RV. IV 18; see Geldner I 440 ff.) might give us a clue to numerous epic stories of strange and unnatural ways by which various gods and sages had been brought on earth. In the Vedic mythology there are many hints which bear a remarkable resemblance to later legends, especially to those originated in the vast stores of the narrative lore, thus indicating that it would be unwise to draw final conclusions merely because the preserved versions of such stories are of a late date.

A handful of ambivalent hints and coarse jokes are connected with Indra's feats even in the Ṛgvedic period.

In RV. III 53,6 Indra has drunk soma and now the poet is urging him to go home where he has a beautiful wife *(jāyā)* and delight *(suraṇam)*; a woman, he adds, is the home *(astam)* and the resting place *(yoni)* (ib., verse 3).[69]) The word *yoni* is sometimes used with a double meaning: a seat prepared for Indra at the sacrifice (I 104,1; VII 24,1) or the female womb (IV 3,2).

RV. X 38,5 makes a reference to the story (retold by TāṇḍyaBr. IX 2,22) of Indra having been fastened by Kutsa with a hundred leather thongs on his testicles. The singer, who asks Indra to come to the sacrifice, reproaches him with the words: "Why, someone like you certainly won't squat bound by (your) testicles".[70])

[68]) *Rigveda Brāhmanas: The Aitareya and Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda*, trsl. by Arthur Berriedale Keith. HOS Vol. 25. Cambridge (Mass.) 1920, p. 477.

[69]) *jāyed astam maghavan sed u yonis tad it tvā yuktā harayo vahantu*, v. 4; *apāḥ somam astam indra pra yāhi kalyāṇīr jāyā suraṇaṃ gṛhe te*, v. 6.
Cf. P. v. Bradke, *Zwei sprachgeschichtliche Skizzen*. IF 4 (1894), p. 86.

[70]) *kim u tvāvān muṣkayor baddha āsate*. Cf. Ved. Stud. I, p. 154, and H. Oertel, JAOS 18 (1907), p. 32.
A. Ludwig reads "fists". ZDMG 40 (1886), p. 713—4.

But the most singular spectacle is presented in the unique Vṛṣākapi Hymn, RV X 86, which describes in a vivid language how the man-ape Vṛṣākapi, who is supposed to be Indra's illegitimate son, insults Indrāṇī, Indra's legitimate wife, by slandering her charms.

The enraged lady bitterly complains to her husband, who is trying in vain to appease her, of his favourite's offence and argues, in a somewhat ungodly manner, that no woman *(strī)* has got more beautiful buttocks *(subhasattarā)*, nor can she offer so much sexual pleasure *(suyāśutarā)*. Nor does any woman, she adds, make better counter-thrusts *(praticyavīyasī)* or spread out her thighs more *(na sakthy udyamīyasī*, verse 6.).[71])

But Vṛṣākapi is not to be beaten so easily. He retorts mockingly that his penis becomes stiff at the mere thought of what will come now (*i. e.* in case she is going to prove it).[72]) He calls her "mother" *(amba)* in the same abusive way the bawd was addressed in later Sanskrit, which is borne out by his next appellation of Indrāṇī "you easily obtainable woman!" *(sulābhike)*. The second part of the stanza may have a strong sexual connotation.[73])

[71]) *na mat strī subhasattarā na suyāśutarā bhuvat /*
na mat praticyavīyasī na sakthy udyamīyasī
viśvasmād indra uttaraḥ.

No parallels to the comparatives of *subhasad-*, *suyāśu*, *prati-√cyu* and *ud-√yam* can be found in the Vedic texts. The word *bhasad-* (f.) appears again in verse 7 of the same hymn, where it means either "posterior" or "glans penis" (see note 73); in the AV., however, it is used merely in the sense of "rump, buttock" of animals (AV. IV 14,8; IX 4,13; 7,8; X 9,21). The term *yāśu* (n.) "genital effusion" (during coitus) appears in RV. I 126,6 (see p. 80n.); in AV. VIII 6,15 we find the negative *ayāśu-*, perhaps "impotent".

I am convinced that the interpretation of the terms *praticyavīyasī* and *sakthy udyamīyasī*, as given above, is the right one, even if I am not quite certain whether the phrase "to make counter-thrusts" (or "answering movements") will be understood in the sense in which I use it. It is of my own making and I found no support for it in the English dictionaries available to me.

Cf. Geldner's translation: "keine drückt sich mehr (an den Mann), keine hebt die Schenkel besser". MW translates these two terms as "pressing closer against or towards" and "raising more or extensively" respectively.

The singular appearance of words of clear sexual significance is noteworthy especially in the RV.

[72]) *uve amba sulābhike yathevāṅga bhaviṣyati / bhasan me amba sakthi me śiro me vīva hṛṣyati*, verse 7.

[73]) It means literally: "My posterior, Oh good mother, my thigh, my head is thrilled (stiff) at the prospect". But it may hide a second meaning: the glans penis, the rod (like a thigh or thighbone) and the "head" of the erect penis (*i. e.* with retracted foreskin). Cf. the use of *anastha āru* "a boneless thigh", meaning the penis in RV. VIII 1,34 (p. 98).

Geldner translates: "O weh, Mütterchen, du leicht zu kriegendes Weibchen, wie es wohl sicher kommen wird, meine Scham, meine Schenkel, mein Kopf jucken mir schier darnach, Mütterchen".

Naturally, the second interpretation would have to be corroborated by further evidence from later texts.

After some more skirmishing a hot discussion ensues between Indrāṇī and Vṛṣākapāyī, the ape's wife, in which both ladies, without more ado, give vent to their opinion about the sexual qualities of their spouses. He is not the master, asserts Indrāṇī indicating Vṛṣākapi, whose rod *(kapṛt)* is hanging down *(rambate)* between his thighs, but he is the master (indicating Indra) for whom the hairy vulva *(romaśam)* becomes expanded *(vijṛmbhate)* when he sets himself down to it (*niṣedus*, verse 16). Vṛṣākapi's lady answers her in the same words: not he (indicating Indra) is the master, for whom the hairy pudendum becomes expanded, when he sets himself down to it, but he (indicating Vṛṣākapi) is the master whose rod is hanging down between his thighs.[74])

The refrain of the hymn "Indra is supreme above all!"[75]) which appears at the end of each stanza, crowns the whole persiflage.

The hymn has been variously interpreted by scholars.[76]) F. E. Parjiter has supplied evidence in order to show that a fable about Indrāṇī's quarrel with Vṛṣākapi is attested in the later narrative literature as well.[77]) He suggested that the story grew up in the Dakkhin where monkeys were worshipped by the Dravidians and, two years later, he asserted the Dravidian origin of Vṛkṣāpi anew.[78]) It is quite possible that the tendencies to

[74]) *na seśe yasya rambate 'ntarā sakthyā kapṛt /*
sed īśe yasya romaśaṃ niṣeduṣo vijṛmbhate, verse 16.
na seśe yasya romaśaṃ niṣeduṣo vijṛmbhate /
sed īśe yasya rambate 'ntarā sakthyā kapṛt, verse 17.
The meaning of the terms used in these two verses can be attested in other passages of the RV.: √*ramb* "to hang down" (about a limp penis) has its correspondent compound verb *ava-*√*ramb* in RV. VIII 1,34; *romaśa-* (n.) "pudenda" is used as an adjective in RV. I 126,7 and VIII 91,6; about the use of *kapṛth-* see p. 97.
Geldner translates: "Der kann nichts, dessen Rute zwischen den Schenkeln hängt; nur der kann's, dem die haarige (Scham) klafft, wenn er sich draufsetzt". H. Oldenberg, on the other hand, believes that both *kapṛt* and *romaśam* mean "penis", and explains the verb *vijṛmbhate* as "tatenlustiges Sicherheben". In his opinion the discussion takes place between Indra and Vṛṣākapi's wife (Ṛgveda II, p. 292) which is, to my mind, psychologically improbable. Besides, the meaning of *vi-*√*jṛmbh* (med.) 'to become expanded" is abundantly attested in other Vedic texts.

[75]) *viśvasmād indra uttaraḥ*.

[76]) Oldenberg (II, p. 290) sees in Vṛṣākapi an ape with strong *vṛṣan-* qualities, while rejecting the traditional belief that he should be regarded as an illegitimate son of Indra.
I regret I was unable to see the studies on the Vṛṣākapi hymn registered in Bibl. véd. and R. N. Dandekar, *Vedic Bibliography*, Bombay 1946 (which came into my hands only during the reading of the proofs).

[77]) JRAS 1911, p. 803—9.

[78]) JRAS 1913, p. 396—400. Parjiter believes that the hymn originated in some outlying region where popular belief did not receive brāhmanic gods with a very deep reverence, and refers to a kind of coitus called *indrāṇī* as part of a custom common among the lower classes (JRAS 1911, p. 807).

present Indra in similar undignified circumstances may be traced to local differencies and regional rivalry.

At any rate, in the light of the examples discussed above it is hardly possible to agree with those scholars who assert that the Vedic gods are generally moral, without erotic attributes.[79])

At the same time, I am not convinced that it is necessary to look upon these hymns as fragments of popular poetry which formed an undercurrent springing forth, from time to time, to the surface in later Epic, Buddhist and classical Sanskrit works. Words like "popular", "aboriginal" and so forth are but a decent disguise of our ignorance of the real state of things (like "substrata" in philology).

Besides, in accepting such view, we have to assume that these 'diversions' escaped the notice of the orthodox priestly editors (or "censors" to whom we are better used in Europe since Roman times) or, as some more cautious critics would have it, that these guardians of sacred traditions were at a loss in dealing with the products of popular lore and so, in their proverbial tolerance (leniency?) they left them, as they were, amidst their own religious and sacrificial works and speculations.

Without claiming any special knowledge of the Vedas I venture to maintain that there are no sound reasons for this conception. In making sharp distinctions between 'moral', *i. e.* officially recognized, or at least tolerated, and 'obscene', *i. e.* popular, widely spread among the lower strata of population and publicly disapproved, we read our own moral standards into the ancient lore. There were certainly taboos on sexual matters in the Ṛgvedic period, but they were quite different from our own as well as from those which we learn to know in later Indian history. It seems that the Ṛgvedic taboos on speech were among the fewest in the long history of Indian literature.

The style of the Ṛgvedic hymns was subjected primarily to the requirements of public competition and to the tastes of the persons who ordered them. The "praises for gifts" *(dānastutis)* at the end of some hymns supply interesting specimen of profane jokes and erotic humour. They are usually of a strictly personal character without a trace of 'popular' origin. This is by no means a sign of a 'primitive' mentality. What we are used to call 'obscene' is cheerfully manifested by the greatest spirits among the cultured people of our age as well.

The brāhmans who preserved and transmitted the Vedic texts always

[79]) "The Vedic gods are, as a rule, sexually moral, and scarcely any erotic word or act is ascribed to them..." S. K. De, op. cit., p. 87.

formed a tiny minority of orthodox priests amidst the mass of the brāhmanic population who sometimes engaged themselves in very unorthodox ways of life. We know that their claims to absolute supremacy and unprecedented privileges, laid down in later lawbooks, were often ignored or successfully challenged. But we know equally well that they were, to all intents and purposes, the real upholders of religious traditions as well as of philosophy, science and education. First of all, they were no dullards as far as the preservation of their sacred writings was concerned and to think of some concessions on their part to the widely popular beliefs of the 'people' would be rather premature in the oldest period. It is hard to believe that any alien or unwonted elements would have 'escaped their notice' or that they would not have known what to do with them within the context of their orally transmitted teaching where every sound had been preserved with the greatest possible care and with the help of a complex of subsidiary scientific disciplines.

On the other hand, I fail to see any good reason for supposing that coarse jokes, especially about the gods, should be ascribed to "folk-lore" or that the Vṛṣākapi Hymn should be characterized as "ein volkstümliches Göttergespräch."[80])

Similarly, the identification of the soma-press and its function with sexual activities could not have originated in popular songs accompanying the process of pressing during the Soma sacrifice.

I believe that in all historical periods, but especially in the distant past, it was the incontestable privilege of the educated, not the masses, to ridicule the commonly esteemed phenomena, to make fun of the widely cherished beliefs or, as in our case, to make persiflage of the gods venerated by the people or intellectual opponents. We may refer not only to the Ṛgvedic poets "carpentering" their songs for material gain, but also to the darkest periods of the European Middle Ages, where the avowed unbelievers would have to be sought for almost exclusively in the ranks of the highest clergy and aristocracy.

These trends, traced as far back as the Ṛgveda, can be followed later in various directions. Most probably we would meet them again in strongly

[80]) Geldner III, p. 274.
M. Winternitz, on the other hand, accepted the theory of L. v. Schroeder that the hymn was a "Generationsmimus" which had been performed as a fertility spell at a Soma-sacrifice, and brought out further evidence from ritual literature to support this view. See his article *Dialog, Ākhyāna und Drama in der indischen Literatur.* WZKM 23 (1909), p. 112—3.
Nevertheless, the origin of the hymn and its ritual application may be two very different things.

lascivious myths and legends regarding various gods and sages, who would be again venerated and ridiculed at the same time, in a curious mixture peculiar to the Indian mind which had been unhampered by abiding religious taboos.

As far as the language is concerned, Richard Pischel and Karl F. Geldner deserve full merit for laying down the foundations for the studies in erotic terminology in their *Vedische Studien.* They have repeatedly pointed out that many expressions with double meaning and sexual connotation had been colloquialisms and, very often, they talk about "slang" as a common basis for such expressions. In fact, Geldner was, and still is, frequently criticized for smuggling modern language and ideas into the ancient idiom.

Leaving aside the question whether it is advisable to explain everything which does not fit our ideas of morality in terms of "slang", we have to maintain that to translate slang by slang does not necessarily involve a modernization of the text. If we translate five different Sanskrit terms used for the male member with one word, *viz.* "penis", we modernize the ancient expressions in spirit much more than Geldner would have done with five utterly disgraceful colloquialisms.

Still, even if we accept the idea of 'slang' being employed in the discussed Vedic passages (which we are reluctant to do to the full extent), it does not necessarily follow that it was a kind of slang used by the common people. It seems much more likely in many instances, that certain words and phrases with ambivalent meanings were part of a priestly jargon that would not be easily understood by an outsider. It could have been an idiom of the professional class of bard-poets and sacrificers, the real upholders of Vedic traditions whose mentality will remain a riddle as long as we do not judge them by their own standards, with all their human weaknesses and, maybe, deficiencies of language.

This does not mean, naturally, that we can explain all the difficulties and obscure notions with the help of such an assumption. It is not as simple as that nor is it the whole solution. We may assert, however, that sexual motives were inherent to certain religious ideas in the Ṛgvedic period. As such, they were freely employed by the authors of the hymns in connection with fertility cults and ideas of procreative powers and generative impulses. Erotic allusions to ritual procedures show that we cannot explain them solely on account of the influence of popular poetry and lascivious tendencies within the narrative lore. Some of the Ṛgvedic hymns with a strong erotic motivation may contain nuclei of the later development of religious

erotics and it is desirable that special studies be undertaken which would show the progress of erotic trends in various fields of religious life and ideas. The Ṛgvedic religion, on the whole, provides favourable conditions for such studies, in spite of the difficulties of a philological and historical nature.

CHAPTER III

ṚGVEDIC SOCIETY

1. Married life.

Social life in the Ṛgvedic age can be reconstructed with the help of direct or implied statements, or from references of a corresponding character made to the gods and their society, whose image can be applied to the worshippers themselves. This kind of evidence can, of course, be deceptive in some cases. Similes and metaphors may allude to exceptional circumstances and should not be generalized. It seems that some scholars, among them R. Pischel and K. F. Geldner, the authors of the *Vedische Studien* and pioneers of erotic studies in the Vedic lore, sometimes failed to appreciate the dangers of such generalizations. As a result, their presentation of the Vedic society inclines to overstress the universal validity of scattered references to courtesans and "free love" and to treat them as an authoritative evidence characterizing the whole Ṛgvedic society.[1])

Still, there are many allusions to sexual activities in the Vedic texts which are conceivable only as occasional references to well-known and commonly recognized phenomena. The decision as to the rate of probability of their real occurrence must rest with detailed researches in specialized aspects of the intimate life of the Vedic people. The survey which is presented here cannot claim to be one of them.

*

Sexual life in the Vedic period was predominantly heterosexual. Homosexuality, in either of the sexes, was almost completely unknown and if

[1]) Cf. Hermann Oldenberg, *Vedaforschung*. Stuttgart und Berlin 1905, p. 18—32. This does not mean, of course, that we are entitled to reject their findings as cheerfully as some of their critics have done in the past. It is true that they availed themselves too freely of Sāyaṇa's comments, but Oldenberg's contention that Sāyaṇa's explanations are either false or occasionally self-evident (l. c., p. 26) is exaggerated.

there were such cases, the Vedic literature ignores them. "In this respect ancient India was far healthier than most other ancient cultures."[2])

According to a later Hindu conception, the sex nature of women was superior to that of men. In the Vedic Saṃhitās, married women often took the initiative in the intercourse and were given full credit of it.

A woman *(jāyā)* prepares her yoni for her husband *(pati)*, filled with desire *(uśatī)* and beautifully attired (RV. IV 3,2). She gives herself to her lord willingly (RV. IX 82,4); she is the home *(astam)*, she is the *yoni* (RV. III 53,4).[3]) The wives *(janayaḥ)* beautify themselves *(śumbhante*, RV. I 85,1) and we often find them rushing into the arms of their husbands and appearing before them in all their beauty. There are also two kind women *(bhadre)* caressing a man *(joṣayete*, RV. I 95,6). Married women reward a bold man (RV. I 62,10). Filled with desire, they caress *(spṛśanti)* a desiring husband (ib. verse 11); they incite him as loving women sexually incite their lovers (RV. I 71,1). A wife *(jāyā)*, lying on a couch, is ready for anything (or anyone?[4]) *araṃ viśvasmai*, RV. I 66,5).

A married woman had to face a number of obstacles and difficulties in fulfilling her sexual desire. A temporary loss of potency and certain ascetic inclinations of the husband seem to be among the main reasons in ancient times. We may quote two characteristic examples depicting such situations.

In the last stanza of RV. VIII 1, the recovered manhood of the giver Āsaṅga is extolled in a way which might be ascribed to a kind of avowed priestly humour on the part of Vedic poets: "His stiff (member), which had been hanging down (before) like a boneless thigh, became visible in front. On perceiving it, Śaśvatī, his wife, exclaimed: 'You possess a fortunate bestower of pleasure, my lord!' "[5])

The other instance is of a different kind. RV. I 179 records a marital

[2]) A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, p. 172.
Neither are there any references to the copulation with animals (bestiofilia), preserved in the later Sanskrit literature, which is a common feature among the ancient as well as modern nomadic tribes. A detailed comparison with the Avestan records would be certainly instructive in this respect.

[3]) To translate the term *yoni* is sometimes a hard nut to crack. When a gambler, who has lost everything, sees the wives of others and their *sukṛtaṃ yonim* (RV. X 34,11), it may mean a "well-prepared womb" ("das wohlbereitete Lager", Geldner), or their "well-ordered home" (A. A. Macdonell, *A Vedic Reader*, p. 192—3).
Cf. *samāne yonau sahaśeyyāya (kāmaḥ)* "the desire of lying together in the same resting place", RV. X 10,7 = AV. XVIII 1,8, where *sahaśeyya-* (n.) means "lying together, cohabitation".

[4]) "enough for all (happiness)", H. Oldenberg in *Vedic Hymns* II. (SBE Vol. 46.).

[5]) *anv asya sthūraṃ dadṛśe purastād anastha ūrur avarambamāṇaḥ /*
śaśvatī nāry abhicakṣyāha subhadram arya bhojanam bibharṣi, v. 34.

dialogue[6]) between the sage Agastya and his spouse Lopāmudrā, which has been recently interpreted and newly evaluated by P. Thieme.[7]) The hymn was probably used as a spell for purification by those who had broken the vow of sexual abstinence and Paul Thieme rightly asserts that there is nothing obscene in this poem, which can be regarded as a document of a naturalistic straightforwardness. The ṛṣi Agastya is a seer venerated throughout the Indian tradition. Besides, there are no reasons to regard the language of the hymn as an 'erotic slang' or vulgar speech.[8])

Lopāmudrā complains of her husband's long abstinence due to his ascetic practices and of her vain efforts to allure him day and night, as she observes that old age, which approaches steadily, ravishes the beauty of the body. She claims a woman's right to be united with her husband whom she calls a *vṛṣan*, thus stressing his virile potency. Prof. Thieme has succinctly pointed out that she speaks of a pure sensuous desire for coition, without embellishing or excusing it through a wish for offspring.[9]) The desire for carnal gratification is the sole motive of her "love".

Lopāmudrā adds the interesting comment that even the ancients, who pursued the ways of truth, finally gave up efforts which did not lead them to the goal.[10]) It shows that already in the Ṛgvedic period there must have been a relatively long tradition of ascetic practices as well as efforts to fight the carnal desires which were always deemed to be the main impediment to higher spiritual goals.

Agastya replies haltingly and tries to defend his pious endeavours, but the fight against lustful desires is finally lost and he succumbs to his wife's charms, as he is unexpectedly overwhelmed by the desire *(kāmaḥ)* of his erect member (*nada* "reed").[11]) Lopāmudrā, on her part, gives vent to her long-suppressed passion. She lets her manly bull "flow out"[12]) and "milks" the groaning sage (see p. 102). The passage is very instructive. It is one of the very few places in the oldest Indian literature that illustrates the submis-

[6]) regarded as an Ākhyāna hymn by Winternitz, against L. v. Schroeder's conception of a fertility drama. M. Winternitz, WZKM 23 (1909), p. 116—8.

[7]) P. Thieme, *Agastya und Lopamudrā*. ZDMG 113 (1963), p. 69—79. We are following his admirably balanced and well-informed exposition.

[8]) The terms like "slang", "erotic" or "vulgar" were employed too freely by Pischel and Geldner, whenever there was a notion of sexual significance in the Ṛgveda. This was one of the crucial points where the criticism of their indiscriminate use of such terms was justified.

[9]) As we shall see, such an approach is generally of a later date.

[10]) *ye cid dhi pūrva ṛtasāpa āsan sākaṃ devebhir avadann ṛtāni /*
te cid avāsur nahy antam āpuḥ sam ū nu patnīr vṛṣabhir jagamyuḥ, v. 2.

[11]) It is explicitly stated by Agastya that he was unaware of the origin of his sudden lust: *nadasya mā rudhataḥ kāma āgann ita ājāto amutaḥ kutaś cit*, verse 4a.

[12]) *lopāmudrā vṛṣaṇaṃ nī riṇāti*, ib.

sion of an ascetic to female sexual charms as a purely physiological process a man can hardly resist. It gives us a clue to numerous instances of 'seductions' of religious men in later sources which generally use a figurative speech. It fully corresponds to our knowledge that the inactive sexual organs may get unaccustomed to adequate impulses and normal functions, but they do not lose their efficacy as other organs do under similar circumstances.[13])

The whole story is summed up in the concluding verse (6) with the important comment that Agastya, the mighty sage, fostered *(pupoṣa)* both modes *(ubhau varṇau)*. These two *varṇas* mean, in Sāyaṇa's interpretation, *kāma* and *tapas*, *i. e.* lust and renunciation, the two classically opposed aims of human life. The notion of the two goals might have served as an inducement to the evolution of the later Hindu conception of trivarga, which developed and broadened the narrowly specified meaning of these two older terms. It would seem probable then that *artha* was a later addition to them.

The whole narration of the hymn, which has been estimated by P. Thieme mainly as a work of art, gives us a rare opportunity to penetrate into the innermost privacy of the homes of ancient sages and to witness the never ceasing duel between the eternal rivals in man, *i. e.* the lust for self--assertion and the lust for self-abnegation which are driving human beings from victory to defeat, from misery to glory.

An interesting story is presented in the controversial song of Apālā (RV. VIII 91)[14]) where, according to later explanations,[15]) the girl was cured by Indra of some skin disease. She is called a maiden *(kanyā)* in verse 1, while later on she speaks about herself as an enemy of her husband *(patidviṣ-)*. The commentators explain that she was driven away from him on account of her illness. According to her description, the skin on the belly and round the genitals was mostly affected, which prevented her from sexual intercourse. In verse 6, the girl asks Indra to cover all these places with hair[16]) and in the closing stanza Indra grants her a sun-skinned complexion. Irrespective of the original intention of the author of the hymn we may adduce that skin diseases, which are still a major issue in hot climate, could have substantially impeded the gratification of sexual desire

[13]) J. Hynie, op. cit., p. 429.
[14]) Cf. the conception of Geldner II, p. 413—4 against the elaborate, but too sophisticated and even controversial opinion of L. v. Schroeder, *Das Apālālied*. WZKM 22 (1908), p. 223—244, and 23 (1909), p. 270—2. A detailed analysis was presented by Meyer III, p. 167 ff.
[15]) reconstructed by H. Oertel, *Indra cures Apālā*. JAOS 18 (1907), p. 26—31.
[16]) *sarvā tā romaśā kṛdhi*. Cf. RV. I 126,7.

in a normal way. To draw further inferences from the fact would be rather premature at the moment.

Wedding and marriage as social phenomena do not contribute much to our knowledge of sexual life and erotic impulses in a given period. The marriage settlement and nuptial provisions have always been based on a social contract which aimed at producing the offspring and securing the family's property, and were almost always devoid of emotional values. As a matter of fact, the vast majority of works professing to deal with ancient Indian erotics make their main objective the endless discussion and diffuse investigation of nuptial ceremonies and marital liabilities, which have a very remote, if any, bearing on the matter of the sexual life of the individual. As far as the legal and social position of women in ancient India is concerned, we possess a rich collection of excellent books treating these questions from all possible angles by fully qualified authors. Only a few remarks, therefore, may be added here in view of those problems which pertain to our quest.

When we say that monogamy was the rule in the Vedic period, though well-to-do chieftains and learned or influential priests and teachers practised polygamy, we are unconsciously implanting our ideas of matrimony in the Indian social pattern. Monogamy as a practice of being married to one at a time or, what is more, of marrying only once, was never observed as a sacrament in India in the sense implied by our Judaic-Christian tradition. Marriage, even if sanctified by gods and religious ceremonies, was primarily a social contract in ancient India and its main objective was to beget children, preferably sons, and to carry on the duties of the clan or family. In Buddhism, for example, marriage was, and still is, regarded as a civil act of social importance, with members of the order *(bhikkhus)* blessing the couple, but not officiating in any religious capacity whatever. In terms of a strictly patriarchal society, the woman and her children were deemed a social asset and adultery, which was not uncommon even in the Ṛgvedic period, meant primarily an interference with the laws of property, not a breaking of God's commandments. In this respect Christian society and consequently European civilization may be regarded as an exception to the practice of the "rest" of the world. Though similar in its outward appearance, the Indian family was governed by laws which are sometimes misapprehended in the West.

It seems that the Vedic family was constituted on similar lines as the modern joint family of the Hindus. We shall see later that the erotic implications of the joint living of two or three generations within a limited

space and modest seclusion are immense and can hardly be appreciated to the full by Europeans.

The hymns very often contain prayers and pleas to various gods for offspring (*tanayaṃ tokam*, lit. "kith and kin") and for their protection. These wishes are never connected with or underlined by any sexual motives. On the whole, children do not seem to have been regarded as a pledge of conjugal affection, but principally as a guarantee of the continutation and welfare of the clan (cf. Zimmer, op. cit., p. 318). Very often, indeed, the acquiring of children is mentioned in direct connection with fighting (RV. I 112,22; II 30,5; IV 24,3; VI 18,6; VII 82,9; VIII 23,12 etc.) or even as the cause of the fight (VI 25,4) alongside cows, fields and water. What is meant is, of course, the acquiring of women fought out in battles and taken as booty, but it does not necessarily mean the women of the aboriginals, as we have abundant evidence of Āryan tribes fighting among themselves with equal vigour and fierce determination.

The women of the defeated enemy *(vadhūḥ)* were made slaves *(dāsī)* by the victors and some of them lived as concubines or could have attained the position of wives (Zimmer p. 107, 117). There are several instances recorded in the later Vedic exegesis of Vedic singers having been born of such unions, but it seems that these women were used primarily as concubines. Nirukta XII 13 asserts that a *rāmā*, *i. e.* a black-skinned woman, should serve only for sexual pleasure[17]); the term *bhadrā vadhūḥ* used in RV. X 27,12 was explained by Pischel as a courtesan (Ved. Stud. I 309). It is possible that her white-skinned counterpart was allotted a better position within the social structure.

In any case, the wife (*jāyā*, lit. "bringing forth") was approached by her husband with the express intention of begetting children with her, and any kind of sexual satisfaction or pleasure derived from the intercourse was subordinate to this common objective. And that is the crucial point in evaluating ancient Indian sexual life, the importance of which has been often underestimated or almost completely ignored.

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Fertility is the magic word which opens the gates to the understanding of the sexual life of married couples in Vedic India. We have a large number of instances at our disposal which clearly show that procreation was at the

[17]) Dev Raj Chanana, *Slavery in Ancient India*, p. 151, note 21, illustrated by more examples taken from later sources.
Cf. also the injunction *nāgniṃ citvā rāmām upeyāt*, TS. V 6,8,3.

centre of social interest both in the secular and religious spheres. The main bulk of nuptial hymns, "love" charms and magic rites is concerned with the sole purpose of obtaining the desired aim by all means that were at the disposal of ancient Vedic people.

The newly wedded couple were carefully prepared for the first coition, which took place with full religious attendance (cf. AV. XIV 2,37-40). The whole rite had to be performed punctiliously in order to produce the desired effect. Marriage ceremonies were a complicated affair, full of magic rites and love spells, accompanied by compelling songs and incantations. Some steps of the ritual were stimulated by the undisguised speech of the officiating priests or family members and friends who took part in the ceremony. So *e. g.* the rite of hand-taking of the bride was directed by a prayer to Pūṣan who was invited to bring her, into whom the men sow their seed,[18]) and who, filled with desire, opens her thighs for them, and into whom they, filled with desire, want to thrust their member *(śepam*, RV. X 85,37). Similarly, the constantly recurring theme of the Atharvavedic rites for successful conception is usually worded with strong expressions assuring the male of his virility: "Mount thou; play the hero; set an embryo in the womb; virile art thou, thou hast virility; for progeny we conduct thee hither" (Whitney's trsl.).[19])

There are many notions connected with the marriage ritual that have not yet been sufficiently explained. For the most part, we have come to know the whole procedure accompanying the recital of the hymns from later texts.[20]) For example, the role of the Gandharvas during the wedding ceremonies is still rather obscure. They are the semi-divine beings and traditional lovers of Apsarases, the celestial courtesans, often propitiated by those who desire offspring.[21]) At the marriage ceremony, however, the

[18]) *yasyām bījam manuṣyā vapanti.*
[19]) *adhi skanda vīrayasva garbham ā dhehi yonyām /*
vṛṣāsi vṛṣṇyāvan prajāyai tvā nayāmasi, AV. V 25,8.
[20]) The difficulties met with in these hymns may be best judged from an illustrative paper by W. Caland, *A Vaidic wedding song*. AO 7 (1929), p. 305—11. The author gives there a tentative translation of a wedding song found in his edition of KāṭhGṛ. (App. IV). Besides many ingenious interpretations, the learned Dutch scholar sternly hints at certain allusions of "obscene meaning" and dismisses them as such.
I have an impression that such omissions are met with mostly in papers written in English!
For a comprehensive study of these problems see M. Winternitz, *Das altindische Hochzeitsrituell*. Wien 1892, especially p. 92 ff.
[21]) A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 137.
The nature of these celestials underwent notable changes in later religion. The origin of the word *apsaras-* itself is still obscure. Wackernagel's explanation as *a--psaras-* "shameless" has been taken into protection against Mayrhofer's rejection by P. Tedesco, in whose opinion "it seems satisfactory in every respect and fits the

husband drives away the Gandharva Viśvāvasu, who had, until then, possessed the girl, with these curious words: "go away... find for yourself another wanton girl[22]) and leave together the wife *(jāyā)* with her husband (RV. X 85,22). In AV. IV 37, which was used for driving away superhuman foes, verse 11 reads (in Whitney's translation): "One as it were a dog, one as it were an ape, a boy all hairy *(kumāraḥ sarvakeśakaḥ)* — having become as it were dear to see, the Gandharva fastens upon women.[23])" It does not necessarily follow that the girl was no longer a virgin, but we have sufficient reasons to believe that virginity was not the prerequisite of marriage, even if it is laid down as a self-evident condition in later texts. In any case, the nuptial hymns usually uphold a difference between a married woman (*jāyā, patnī* etc.) and a girl to be just wedded (*kumārī* etc.). In AV. XIV 2,7 the word *vadhūḥ* is used for a "bride", while in verse 20 *nārī* is applied with the same meaning. The uncertainty about the exact meaning of these terms might have been caused, among other things, by local divergencies which we are unable to assess.

It ought to be mentioned here, anyhow, that with the exception of the brāhmanic lawbooks and the generally moralizing literature, the requirement of virginity does not figure prominently in the records of the ancient Indian society. It seems likely, therefore, that premarital intercourse was, if ever, discouraged mainly on social grounds, but was not strictly forbidden by any religious authority.

Many detailed descriptions of Indian wedding ceremonies are at our disposal and, on reading them, we can almost see how eagerly and even cheerfully the authors plunge into the explanations of the minutest steps and details of the ritual. Nevertheless, we know very little about the behaviour of the newly wedded couple at the time of the performance of those rites and ceremonies which were aimed at their marital happiness. Perhaps we may venture to suggest that the endlessly tedious ceremonial procedures, accompanied by enervating rites and popular customs, could result in a nervous strain that might have been detrimental to the first sexual acquaintance of the couple and, in some cases, to their erotic experience for a long time to come. Thus the possibility of a premarital sexual experience in the Vedic period could have protected them from any major surprises on the unpleasant side. Needless to say, these are not more than unsubstantiated suggestions which may be proved wrong by further studies. Unfortunately, psychological research in the ancient cults and rituals practically does not exist.

deepest nature of the Apsarases, while their association with water is apparently due to popular etymology." JAOS 74 (1954), p. 180.

[22]) *anyām icha prapharvyam*; "another willing maid", Griffith; "eine dralle Dirne!", Geldner. Cf. *śūdrām icha prapharvyam*, AV. V 22,7; *pivarīṃ prapharvyam*, AV. III 17,3. In the last case, Geldner's interpretation would be impossible (see p. 79).

[23]) *priyo dṛśa iva gandharvaḥ sacate striyam* (should be *striyas*, see Whitney, trsl., p. 213). In verse 7 his testicles are split, his member *(śepaḥ)* shut.

As the guardians of Soma, the Moon, the Gandharvas had been, quite obviously, closely linked with women, whose life-periods were related to the lunar revolutions *(menses)*.

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We are accustomed to believe that the Ṛgvedic Āryans were a pleasant warlike people with a sound inclination to the simple and healthy pleasures of life. We like to see them in the role of "the Old Sinners" who loved and hated in a primitively chivalrous manner not so very different from the heroes of our boyhood romances. But the testimony of the Vedic texts somehow does not agree with these cherished ideas. The reality is not as pleasant as we are inclined to believe. Besides merry festivals and chariot-races we meet very often with a desperate struggle for bare existence and instinctive fears for self-preservation. In married life, we are mostly confronted with a merciless fight for an undisputed social position secured by procreative abilities.

The use of spells and "love" charms in the Atharvaveda has very little to do with the emotions of love, attachment etc., as we might infer from our inherited associations. Here again, such terms as "love charms", "love magic" etc. may be considerably misleading.

It was a man's chief concern to acquire and maintain sufficient potency to beget children and thus to substantiate his claims to the leadership within the family or community. Alluring pleas and supplications to the gods for adequate potency with meaningful references to their own manifestations of virility and sexual vigour clearly show that normal sexual functions and potency were by no means a secured state of affairs. In the Atharvaveda, we come across specific rites which were believed to induce appropriate sexual vigour. Certain plants were also used for the same purpose.

Thus *e. g.* the hymn AV. IV 4 was used in a rite for promoting virile potency, with a penis-erecting herb. The spell was supposed to restore male virility *(puṃsāṃ vṛṣṇya)* to the performer of the rite. His member *(pasaḥ)* should be taut like a bow (verse 4,6,7); similarly AV. VI 72. In AV. VI 101,1 a spell implores (in Whitney's trsl.): "... let thy member *(śepaḥ)* increase limb by limb *(yathāṅgaṃ vardhatām)*; with it smite the woman" *(tena yoṣitam ij jahi)*.

It is not difficult to discover the reasons for the unusual anxiety recurring in the ardent prayers for the increase and maintenance of sexual powers. The rugged living conditions of those times, constant warfare, exhausting labour and especially malnutrition made the fear of the loss of potency ever present. Evil beings were dancing like impotent men.[24])

The position of married women was much more dependant on their fecundity than that of men. They were expected to give birth preferably to sons and in several hymns of the RV. we encounter pleas of the future parents to the gods to give them sons and "to give daughters elsewhere."

A blameless woman is enjoyed by her husband;[25]) she is also skilful in her work (RV. I 92,3). A married woman is usually called *jāyā*, especially in connection with *pati;* the most frequent among other terms are *nārī, strī* and *patnī*. In a good family's house *(harmya), i. e.* in a large residence of a wealthy person, various types of women are mentioned under the names of *nārī* and *strī;* they are sweet-scented *(puṇya-gandhāḥ*[26]), RV. VII 55,8), well clothed (*suvāsāḥ*, RV. I 124,7; IV 3,2) and devoid of unlucky signs (AV. I 18,3-4), which apply to the bodily beauty and outward appearance. It has to be noted that some of these attributes of beauty and embellishment of the person are seldom met with in later literature with regard to married women.

In case of a wife's *(patnī)* sterility, the husband could take another woman for begetting children. We are told that the barren wife was wearing cast-off clothes, while her fortunate rival prided herself on ornaments of gold (RV. I 122,2). Again, we may observe that a married woman's social position depended to a large extent on her procreative abilities. And this was usually the apple of discord among women belonging to the same husband. They are occasionally called *jāyāḥ* (AV. III 4,3), but their

[24]) *klībā iva pranṛtyantaḥ*, AV. VIII 6,11.
The word *klība-* is not found in the RV.; in AV. VI 138,1—3 we find the phrase *klībaṃ √kṛ* "to make impotent". On the other hand, *vadhri-* (adj.) "castrated, emasculated" as opposed to *vṛṣan-* "virile" is applied to Vṛtra (RV. I 32,7), whose impotence is brought into connection with allusions to his incestuous relation with his mother (verse 9). Cf. also RV. X 102, 12 *(vṛṣā yad ājiṃ vṛṣaṇā siṣāsasi codayan vadhriṇā yujā).*
vadhri- is used in AV. incantations: *vṛṣā tvaṃ vadhrayas te sapatnāḥ* "you are virile, your rivals impotent", AV. V 20,2; *vadhre vadhriṃ tvākaram* "eunuch, I have made you castrated", AV. VI 138,3.

[25]) *anavadyā patijuṣṭā nārī*, RV. I 73,3.
The verb *√juṣ* is often used in its causative form *√joṣay* "to caress": *brahmapriyaṃ joṣayante varā iva*, RV. I 83,2; *vadhūyur iva yoṣaṇām (√joṣay)*, ib. III 52,3; *ubhe bhadre joṣayete na mene*, ib. I 95,6 etc.

[26]) "of pure odour", Whitney at AV. IV 5,3.
The use of scents for erotic stimulation is constantly met with in ancient Indian literature.

common designation is mostly *janayaḥ*.[27]) It is very difficult to appraise their exact position within the Ṛgvedic social structure. It seems, however, that the terms "wife" and "spouse" are not always the right expressions and that they contributed to our misunderstanding of these women's real status.

The king has usually more wives (RV. VII 18,2) and we are told about his favourite wife (*vāvātā*, RV. IV 4,8) in contrast to the wife abandoned on account of her sterility (RV. X 102,11). We read of one common husband *(ekaḥ samānaḥ patiḥ)* of the wives (*janī*, RV. VII 26,3; cf. IX 86,32), but we are not quite clear about their exact position, either. This term is sometimes connected with adultery. We read about these women deceiving their husband *(patiripe janayaḥ)*, who are of evil conduct *(durevāḥ);* they are wicked *(pāpāsaḥ)*, sinful *(anṛtāḥ)* and untrue (*asatyāḥ*, RV. IV 5,5).[28])

We have also an interesting example of a disguised man *(saṃvṛta)* creeping to women (*janī*, RV. VIII 17,7). In AV. V 17,18 a place "where a brāhman stays a night miserably without a wife" *(vijāniḥ)* is threatened with all kinds of misfortune. That these women were not kept only for sexual pleasure is made clear by RV. V 46,8 where the *ṛtur janīnām* is mentioned, *i. e.* the time after the menstrual discharge which was believed to be favourable for procreation (usually 16 days after the appearance of the menses); the term can be also applied to intercourse performed at that time. Such women should naturally have become impatient to be kept on the waiting-list for a too long time and tried to find a consolation elsewhere. We find an angry old man who has a young wife (*yuvajāniḥ*, RV. VIII 2,19) and the unmarried seeking wives (*janīyantaḥ*, RV. VII 96,4 corresponding to AV. XIV 2,72). A *jāni* is sometimes presented as a concubine. There is also a mention of a man in bed with two women (*dvijāniḥ*, RV. X 101, 11).

A girl with bodily defects had not much chance of finding a lover. Nobody would prevent a man from carrying off or woeing a blind girl (RV. X 27,11). A good-looking girl, on the other hand, was happy; she herself chose her friends among the people.[29])

A fierce fight often raged among the wives of the same husband; they are called *sapatnīḥ*, female rivals. All their endeavours were centred on the

[27]) We have no clear idea of the distinctions implied by these names. It is highly doubtful whether they were used indiscriminately. See V. I. I, p. 285—6. We know, for example, that later on, *jāyā* was a married wife with children. The distinction of sense suggested by V. I. is this: *jani* meant "wife" as bearing children, while *patnī* was "wife" as being mistress of the house (fem. of *pati*); see op. cit., p. 275 note.

[28]) It seems that women were also allowed to have more husbands (two are mentioned in AV. IX 5,27—8), only we do not know under what circumstances.

[29]) *bhadrā vadhūr bhavati yat supeśāḥ svayaṃ sā mitraṃ vanute jane cit*, ib. verse 12.

effort to win the man's favour (rather than affection, AV. VI 89), to fix his desire (AV. VII 38) and to expel the other from her favourable position, by means of magic and sorcery (RV. X 145 = AV. III 18; VII 113 etc.). Most of these spells and charms were later known as the "women's rites" *(strī-karmāṇi*, Kauś. 32,28 to the end of Book IV). They are largely vicious incantations and wild exorcisms, full of hot-blooded hatred and passionate outbursts of jealousy, such as we would never find among men's compositions. These hymns often make use of very obscure terms which we are unable to identify. The RV. has a number of such charms in the tenth Book.[30]) In general, the language of the "women's rites" corresponds to the common experience that the vocabulary of certain older or sexually deficient women is much wider and richer in the application of coarse and even vicious terms to the sexual sphere, a fact of which men remain politely oblivious.

It is interesting that the charms addressed to men are very moderate in their expressions. "Mayest thou not make mention of other women" (AV. VII 38,4 = 37,1, Whitney's trsl.) belongs to the mildest incantations. Most charms, however, apply to the rival women. They make them barren *(asū)*, without progeny (AV. VII 35,2-3); they "shut up" their genitals (AV. I 14,4) and induce spinsterhood etc. Some of the terms contained in these hymns have double meanings with venomous allusions that are not obvious at a first glance. For example, a rival is cursed with these words: "Let this girl, O king, be shaken down to you (as) bride, O Yama"[31]) (AV. I 14,2). A young bride *(vadhūḥ)* or concubine was probably meant who would be more attractive to the husband and, therefore, should die and become the bride of the god of Death. But the verb *ni-*√*dhū* "to shake to and fro" is also a pungent expression for a woman's movements during coition, similarly to the noun *nidhuvana-*. So we get another, much more illustrative meaning: let you cohabit with her, O Death, (as) your bride, and not this man. The curse is, of course, much more vivid in the original which can express both meanings with the same words.

We have also hymns which were used as antidotes against such imprecations. These were aimed at diverting the curses from the afflicted (AV. II 7; 10,1). RV. X 159, on the other hand, contains a victorious song and

[30]) The commentary usually does not take any notice of their erotic implications and reduces the hymns to a verily dull lecture.
A detailed description of these rites in AV. is given by V. W. Karambelkar, *The Atharvavedic Civilization*. Nagpur 1959, p. 16—7, 66—7, 191—6.

[31]) *eṣā te rājan kanyā vadhūr ni dhūyatāṃ yama*. Cf. the noun *nidhuvana-* (n.) which "in its obscene sense may be as old as the Veda", Whitney I, p. 15.

exuberant self-praise of a woman who succeeded in crushing her rivals *(sapatnīḥ)* and now occupies the first place among all in the house. In jubilantly proud terms she announces her victory and delightedly dwells on her rivals' defeat and humiliation.

Among the "women's rites" we find several songs which were used with the aim of compelling a man's passion, accompanied by strewing of beans, burning of arrow-tips and piercing of the man's effigy. The man should burn *(anu śocatu)* for her, cherish her *(smaratāt)*; Maruts, the gods of storms and winds, should craze him (*unmādayata*, AV. VI 130,1-4); he should be father of her sons (ib. 131,3), filled with sexual desire *(smara-)* and mental agony (*ādhi*, ib. 132,1 foll.). In another hymn a woman *(nārī)* prays to become the chief consort *(mahiṣī)* of her husband (*pati*, AV. II 36,3).

It may be seen that, dealing with these hymns, such words as "love, affection, attachment" and even "jealousy" should be used with great circumspection. "To compel a man's love" actually means, in the language of the Atharvaveda, "to be desired or fertilized by him." There can be no talk of any deeper emotions or refined feelings underlying these interests, which were more social and economic than emotional or even sexual.[32])

The most desperate terms are used by women who were, in the end, ultimately deprived of their husbands' favour. The spells directed against such men aim at destroying their virile power and at evoking their impotency. Some of them are again difficult to interpret owing to the employment of certain very obscure terms (*e. g.* AV. VII 90). We can quote at least one example, that of AV. VI 138 which was used in a fierce rite of sorcery, with the wrapping, crushing and burying of urine and faeces. The spell contains a prayer to make the man impotent *(klība)*, to split his testicles *(āṇḍyau)*, to make him a eunuch *(vadhri)*, a sapless one *(arasa)*, to split the two tubes *(nāḍyau)* in which his virility *(vṛṣṇya)* stands and to crush his penis *(śepaḥ)* which is on another woman's genitals *(muṣkau)*. The wild repetition of these curses reveals the utmost despair of the unlucky one

[32]) "the central point of morality in the epic times, as in the Vedic age, was the need for begetting sons, and marriage was considered a means for achieving this end. When this end could not be gained, a good deal of deviation from what was strictly orthodox was permitted." P. Thomas, *Kāma-Kalpa*. Bombay 1960, p. 24. There is a marked difference between the hot-blooded spells used by lovers and the hymns which belong to "the calmer sphere of conjugal life". M.Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda*, p. 71.

A powerful longing may be expressed by the verb *anu-*√*śuc* "to burn (with passion) for" (acc.), AV. VI 130,1 ff., but the noun *smara-* (m.), in connection with this verb, means "sexual desire", *i. e.* "recollection" of female charms, and certainly not "love" (Whitney) or "love charm" (Ludwig); ib. verse 1—3; VI 131, 1—2; 132,1.

who performed such a rite, contrary to the mechanical technique of the usual "love" charms, which must have had a considerable market among the common people.

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Marriage was the craved-for goal of many young girls *(kanyā, yuvatī, yōṣā, kumārī* etc.). They had ample opportunities to meet young men at festivals and wedding ceremonies of their friends. We read about girls *(kanyāḥ)* who deck themselves with gay adornment to go to join the bridal feast *(vahatuḥ*, actually "the bridal procession", RV. IV 58,9; VS. XVII 97) or a festival (gathering, *samana*, RV. IV 58,8; VI 75,4; VII 2,5; X 86,10; 168,2 etc.; VS. XVII 96).

A young woman *(vadhūḥ!)* goes in search of a husband *(patim icchanty eti)* who would make her his first wife (*mahiṣī*, RV. V 37,3); another girl *(kanyā)* wins a young husband by pious continence[33]) *(brahmacaryeṇa*, AV. XI 5,18). But, above all, festivals *(samana)* of various kinds were the most important meeting places of young men and beautiful maidens (AV. II 36,1) as well as of unmarried maids *(agrū)* who were still in search of a husband (RV. VII 2,5; AV. VI 60,1-3) and courtesans (RV. IV 58,8) who made good business there (see Ved. Stud. II 315).

The word *samana* has been variously interpreted. It may mean a "festival" or "gathering" (RV. I 124,8 accoring to Griffith, but Geldner has "marriage", I 194 note), a "wedding-assembly" (AV. VI 60,2 according to Whitney) or an "amorous union" (MW). In connection with these *samanas*, damsels *(vrāḥ)* have been mentioned who go there (RV. I 124,8). Now, the word *vrā* presents another problem. It should mean a "heap, multitude" according to MW ("Haufe, Schaar", pw), but A. Bergaine understands it as "femelle en rut" or "femme amoureuse" and, following him, Geldner translates it "das Lockweibchen", as a word for a female animal used by hunters to entice the male species. A different interpretation of *vrāḥ* in AV. II 1,1 was offered by M. Lindenau.[34])

In RV. I 126,5 they are called *viśyā vrāḥ* "belonging to the community", which Geldner interprets as "Clandirnen" and Pischel as "die Frau, die den *viś* gemeinsam ist" (Ved. Stud. II 320). It does not necessarily mean "harlots" in the real sense of the word, but it can have been used for a "bunch" of local damsels who entice, in one way or another, men of various

[33]) "by Vedic studentship", Whitney, which does not make the sense any clearer.
[34]) Max Lindenau, *Ein schwieriger Hymnus des Atharvaveda* (II,1). ZII 1 (1922), p. 36—7.

age and social position by their fresh beauty and, perhaps, through their outspoken behaviour. The argument may carry us a little bit too far, but it would be surprising not to find in India certain groups of village youth of rather loose manners who would be called by disapprovingly ironical names.[35]) And if ever there was a literary document in ancient India which would preserve their colloquial nickname, it is the Ṛgveda Saṃhitā.

2. Sexual relations

We have seen that the primary end of marriage was to beget and bear offspring and that this was sometimes the sole purpose of marital intercourse, while the gratification of the sexual urge was secondary to the social function of conception.

The implantation of the social requirements of married sexual life in our minds has led to a complete misunderstanding of the aims of sexual life in general. We have become used to celebrating maternity as the highest goal of sexual life and to regard conception as its most desirable culmination. The care and tending of the young was imposed on human society as its noblest achievement.

If this were true, man would have to be regarded as an extraordinary exception from the laws immutably governing the rest of the animal world. Nature around us presents quite a different picture. There, sexual life and maternity are two different things, which are kept quite apart. The laws of life have the greatest regard for the period of courtship and mating, for which they equip living creatures with all the necessary requisites, while maternity is treated by them as a tedious affair of long duration which is left over to mothers, deprived of all their previous attractions, in ninety nine per cent of cases.[36]) We may only recall how many nuptial nights in Nature remain barren, without progeny, to realize that the main function of sexual relations in natural conditions consists in the extreme satisfaction of the physiological drives intertwined with furthering the higher mental processes which are demonstrably separate from the tiring labour of procreation.

In the Vedic society these two functions seem to have been kept separate in a way which strongly resembles the described state of affairs. A pregnant woman was likely to be excluded from the sexual partnership with the man.

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[35]) Dancing at public festivals must have been a wellcome opportunity for young people to meet. See Zimmer, op. cit., p. 287—8.
[36]) J. Komárek, op. cit., pp. 11,255.

In the sphere of extramatrimonial relations, the sexual traffic was in full swing in the oldest Vedic period. We see paramours *(jāra)*[37]) going to women *(yoṣit-*, RV. IX 38,4) and waking a sleeping girl *(sasatī*, RV. I 134,3), as well as a woman *(yoṣā)* calling out to her dear paramour (RV. IX. 32,5; id. about a *kanyā*, IX 56,3). The goddess Uṣas looks like a girl who comes *(ācarantī)* to her paramour, and not like one who departs from him *(punar yatī*, RV. VII 76,3) *i. e.* looking different after the amorous struggle. Similar pictures became a very popular theme with the authors of the classical Kāvya poetry.

It seems that both sexes were equally active in establishing sexual relations and it is difficult to give here priority to men. After all, we know that in many such cases the initiative is only seemingly on the male side.

We have seen that cosmetics were in vogue with men as much as with women already in the prehistoric period of the Indus civilization. We can quote similar instances from the oldest Vedic texts. A lover *(marya)*[38]) rushes after young females *(yuvatī*, RV. IX 89,16; *yoṣā*, AV. XVIII 4,60), after he has cleansed his body, certainly by applying some cosmetics (RV. IX 96,20; cf. I 186,7 where Indra is called "the most fragrant among men"). He thinks at a young woman *(yoṣā)* and invites her (RV. IX 20,5), or goes to a place of rendezvous with her (RV. IX 93,2). The girls respond accordingly. Women *(janayaḥ)* unite with a lover (RV. X 43,1) and a woman *(yoṣaṇā)* also gives herself to him (RV. X 39,14; cf. 40,6).

Several times we read about a girl *(kanyā)*, usually interpreted as a "maiden, virgin", who "opens herself" to her lover;[39]) similarly about a *yuvatī*.[40]) The roots $\sqrt{śvañc}$ and $\sqrt{nam}$ may be taken as synonyms expressing the girl's submission to the lover in sexual intercourse. It is said that both are longing for each other and are of one mind in this respect.

While the words *jāra* and *marya* are used mostly for a "lover" or "paramour", the terms *vara* and *kāmin* usually denote a 'lover' who is, more or less, in the position of a "suitor", while *janya* has the sense of bridesman (RV. IV 38,6; AV. XI 8,1). Such lovers (*varāḥ*) adorn themselves with gold etc. (RV. V 60,4); they are cherished by girls (RV. I 83,2). The

[37]) "paramour" is preferred to "lover" in Ved. Stud. I, p. 196.

[38]) Pischel thinks again of a "paramour".

[39]) cf. Lanman, *Sanskrit Reader*, p. 385, and AV. XVIII 3,50; hardly "receives with open arms" (MW).

The word *kanyalā* is used in AV. only. She is lustful *(vṛṣaṇyantī*, AV. V 5,3), and we read about girls who are eager *(uśatīḥ)* when going to a husband *(patiṃ yatīḥ*, AV. XIV 2,52).

[40]) *yūne yuvatayo namanta*, RV. X 30,6; *uc chvañcasva ni nama*, RV. X 142,6; 18,11; AV. XVIII 3,50; *maryāyeva kanyā śaśvacai te*, RV. III 33,10.

word *kāmin* is frequently used in AV. for a lover (II 30,2) desiring a wife *(janikāma*, ib. verse 5; cf. I 34,5; VI 8,1). Another type of paramour or gallant *(upapati)* is mentioned with a lover *(jāra)* as a victim in the human sacrifice (VS. XXX 9; TBr. III 4,4,1), but we do not know anything else about him.

There are several hymns in the AV. which aim at securing a woman's love, *i. e.* at reducing her to a man's will (AV. VI 102; 139). Equally, AV. VI 8 was used for bringing a woman under one's control, and in AV. VI 9,1 the desire *(kāma)* for the body *(tanu)* is explicitly mentioned. Compared to the "women's rites", these hymns are as innocuous as a lizard against a cobra. The heart of the girl's image was pierced with an arrow of desire *(iṣuḥ kāmasya*, AV. III 25,1 foll.) or the secret wish to unite the genitals (*bhaga*) was expressed quite ingeniously: "What [was] within, [be] that without; what [was] without, [be] that within" (AV. II 30,4).[41])

The last but safest resort whereby a man could win his sweetheart seems to have been, already in the oldest period, to buy her attention. We shall never know whether there was a mocking smile or a deep sigh (or both) hovering on the lips of the sage who made the comment that an open-handed (*i. e.* bountiful, liberal) man *(bhoja)* wins the sweet-smelling womb (or bed? — *yoni)* first, then a bride *(vadhūḥ)*. For him the beautiful girl *(śumbhamānā kanyā)* stays at home, prepared (RV. X 107, 9-10).

Finally, an interesting wish has been registered in AV. III 17,3, *viz.* to get a "plump wench" (in Whitney's trsl. — *pīvarīṃ prapharvyam)*. The commentary explains *pīvarī* by *sthūlā* and *prapharvī* as *prathamavayāḥ kanyā* (Whitney I 116). This certainly does not suggest the classical ideal of bounteous beauty found in numerous Hindu sculptures. The exaggeratedly broad hips and slender waists of these figures, as well as swelling breasts and pert attitudes stress their sexual qualities while here, in the Ṛgvedic period, actual corpulence was probably meant. In fact, this is a striking feature of most female figurines from prehistoric times which do not always represent pregnant women or aspects of fertility. According to a not wholly unjustified belief, still prevalent in India, fatness means wealth and well-being. This idea is supported by the further example of the wish pronounced during the wedding ceremony, that the husband should grow superior to his spouse by fatness *(payasā*, AV. VI 78,2).

The Vedic singers are sometimes presenting themselves as desiring for women too *(janīyanta)* and, therefore, they are looking for someone who would give them wives *(janidā*, RV. IV 17,16; cf. V 31,2; VII 96,4 etc.).

[41]) Whitney's trsl.: *yad antaraṃ tad bāhyaṃ yad bāhyaṃ tad antaram.*

Such women are also called *vadhū* (RV. VII 18,22; I 126,3; VIII 19,36 etc.), *yoṣaṇā* (VIII 46,33; 56,4) or *kanyā* (IX 67,10).

An amusing dialogue has been recorded in RV. I 126 which is a *dāna-stuti* (praise of liberality). The singer Kakṣīvat, who is supposed to be the son of a king and a slave-woman and the author of several RV. hymns, receives from king Svanaya Bhāvya presents which include women *(vadhū)*. In the last two verses he talks with one of the girls and praises her for granting him a hundred delights.[42]) The girl mockingly invites him to handle her relentlessly in the proper place *(upopa me parā mṛśa)* and not to believe that her things (charms) are deficient (or small: *mā me dabhrāṇi manyathāḥ)*. In fact, she adds, she is hairy all over "the place" as a Gandhāri-sheep (verse 6-7).[43])

We may infer from numerous instances that free sexual relations before marriage were quite usual in the Ṛgvedic period. There are no explicit rules about the chastity or even virginity of girls before marriage. Young people had many opportunities to meet and learn to know each other intimately during various festivals and ceremonies in which girls and women

[42]) expressed very frankly: *dadāti mayhaṃ yādurī yāśūnām bhojyā śatā*, verse 6. She was *yādurī, i. e.* effusing copious moisture during the intercourse, and she granted him a hundred of sexual enjoyments *(bhojya-)* manifested in her genital effusions *(yāśu-)*.

The same thing is probably meant in AV. V 17,12: *nāsya jāyā śatavāhī kalyāṇī talpam ā śaye* "not on his couch lies a beautiful hundred-bringing wife". PW explains the term as "a rich dowry".

[43]) *sarvāham asmi romaśā*; "glaub nicht, dass ich nur wenige (Haare) habe. Ich bin ganz behaart...", Geldner. But the word *dabhra* cannot mean the pubic hair here. She could not have wanted to point out her sexual maturity (the hair being an unmistakable sign of attained puberty), as she had cohabited passionately with him before. The girl rather entices the poet to more audacious conquests, because her genitals are suited for a more vigorous treatment *(upa upa* may intensify the verb), and will not be harmed as they are grown all over with a thick pubic hair.

All the same, the Indian tradition and even modern Indian scholars take *romaśā* as the proper name of the king's wife. See *e. g.* Candra Cakravarti, *Sex Life in Ancient India*. Calcutta 1963. This book is a curious mixture of extensive (and mostly irrelevant) medical, etymological, ethnographical and sexuological explanations which occasionally touch upon the sexual life in ancient India too.

On p. 107 we read: Romaśā to Svanaya Bhavayavya: "Cover me in crouching posture with tightening pressure by holding the nape of my neck (with your hands); my vulva is hairy (long luxuriant pubic and axillary hairy growth is associated with hyperproduction of ovarian and adrenal androgens; *romaśā* = *N Pers rum* = pubic hair) like an ewe (*avi* = *Lith* avis = *L* ouis = *Gk* ois = *Russ* ovisa = *OHG* awi) of Gāndhāra", *Rv* 1. 126.7. Bhavayavya affirms: "Healthy, very healthy this Kasīkā (Kuśikā, a Hunnish tribe) holding my waist by her legs is giving me hundreds of intense coital enjoyments with orgiastic discharges." — *Rv* 1.126.6.

Here are the two stanzas which inspired the author to his jubilant outburst of encyclopaedic knowledge: *āgadhitā parigadhitā yā kaśīkeva jaṅgahe / dadāti mahyaṃ yādurī yāśūnām bhojyā śatā // upopa me parā mṛśa mā me dabhrāṇi manyathāḥ / sarvāham asmi romaśā gandhārīṇām ivāvikā*.

In AV. V 5,7 there is a compound *lomaśa-vakṣaṇa* a "hairy-bellied one".

took an active part. In later Vedic literature there are references to the sons of unmarried girls *(kumārī-putrāḥ)* and in the oldest period we encounter the exposure of illegitimately born babies. Even the wedding hymns of AV. XIV do not necessarily require the virginity of the bride. According to them the bride passed the hands of several gods before being handed over to her lawful suitor. The Gandharvas and other superhuman beings are driven away from the nuptial bed, because the girl does not belong to them any more. Some scholars find similar indications in the already mentioned Apālā song (p. 55),[44]) *viz.* her union with the god Indra, but the analogy in this case seems to be a little far-fetched.

In the Ṛgvedic period there was not yet a general consensus on the mental abilities of women. In RV. VIII 33,17 the poet lets Indra voice his opinion on the matter: "Indra declared that the mind of a woman was ungovernable and her temper fickle."[45]) From these and similar utterances we may adduce that the author refers rather to women's uncontrollable temperament than to their slow intelligence.

3. Prostitution

There is no evidence of child marriages in the Saṃhitās, but we have seen how important it was to find a husband for a girl by a proper time, which meant approximately that of her first menstrual discharge. Whenever this provision could not be fulfilled, for whatever reasons, a situation arose which might lead to an indiscriminate choice of partners and ultimately to open prostitution. Brotherless girls *(abhrātaraḥ)* are mentioned (RV. I 124,7) roaming about *(vyantaḥ)* and making advances to men, because they have to find a husband for themselves. It seems, therefore, that their sexual qualities helped them to make the best of a bad bargain. They are named together with wicked women hostile to their husbands *(patiripo janayo durevāḥ*, RV. IV 5,5). They are sometimes regarded as concubines or courtesans (Ved. Stud. II 299). Equally, a maiden growing old at the home of her parents (called *amājur)* is depicted as going forth from the common dwelling with the view of amorous pleasure (RV. I 117,7; II 17,7). Such girls were probably not much in demand; at one place they are said to be dull (*mūrāsaḥ*, RV. VIII 21,15).

An interesting evidence was preserved in the hymns of Ghoṣā, an unmarried daughter of Kakṣīvat, who invokes the Aśvins, the celestial twins

[44]) cf. L. v. Schroeder in WZKM 22 (1908), p. 343—4.

[45]) *indraś cid ghā tad abravīt striyā aśāsyam manaḥ / uto aha kratuṃ raghum.*

and helpers of men, to grant her a husband (RV. X 39, 40, 41). As can be expected, these hymns are virtually imbued with erotic allusions. The authoress described herself as *amājur* (39,3) and she enjoys dwelling on the girl's submission to a man (39,14; 40,2,11). With an oldmaidish frankness she asks for a young man *(yuvā)* who would stay in her lap etc. (40,11).

It is very difficult to decide whether these women can be counted among concubines or courtesans, but we must admit that their social position was potentially inclining in such a direction. They certainly provided ample opportunities for men to gratify their sexual desires outside matrimony and, occasionally, their mode of living may have developed on the same lines as that of full-fledged courtesans. Again, there are undeniable traces of their active role in sexual life.

The widow *(vidhavā)*, whose social position was fairly secure in the Vedic period,[46]) was among those women who could have offered due hospitality to inquisitive lovers. She draws her brother-in-law *(devar)* to bed like a woman *(yoṣā)* does a lover *(marya*, RV. X 40,2), *i. e.* not only for the sake of social obligations provided by levirate[47]) (after all, *devara* can also mean a "lover" in later Sanskrit). We do not know much about the life of a widow from Indian literary sources. One thing is, however, certain. We should not think of an Indian widow as an old woman. In the classical period there were many "widows" who had never seen their husbands who died young, because they were married long before their adolescence. Nevertheless, they were treated on equal terms with their much older sisters. Still, their fate is known mostly from theoretical law-books and other one-sided accounts which escape any confrontation with reality. Moreover, everybody seems to be interested solely in their legal position and lawful place within the social structure, while very few scholars have ever tried to examine more closely their real private life, irrespective of their publicly acknowledged status which, after all, is the least attractive aspect of the whole problem.

First, we would have to ask what do we know about the life and sexual problems of widows in our own milieu? History could certainly provide us with many examples of widows engaged in notable activities in the sphere of economic, social and even political relations. Even thus, we are still in the dark about their private problems and, what would be most revealing,

[46]) cf. M. Winternitz, *Die Witwe im Veda*. WZKM 29 (1915), p. 172—203.
[47]) *niyoga*, a custom implemented in case a man was incapable of raising progeny or died childless; his brother was permitted or even obliged to practise intercourse with his wife and beget children.

about the interrelations of their spared sexual energy and the supplementary mechanisms manifested through their outward interests.

Unfortunately, there is a great deal of false shame on both sides in this respect, and so we are hardly able to realize at all, how immense and sometimes even hopeless problems are often facing a lonely woman who has suddenly lost one of her vital supports. Even the most-developed legislation is good for nothing here.

The complications facing a young widow in a Hindu joint-family are unimaginable for a European. Without drawing any conclusions from these reflections, we may be sure that, very often, the widows were fully developed women with a certain sexual experience and aspirations that could not have been wholly eliminated by the death of their husbands.[48]) Therefore, it is not unnatural to suppose that widows of good families might have offered inconspicuous hospitality to young members of the household and could have been preferred to the publicly known courtesans.

As far as undisguised prostitution is concerned, we have not much direct evidence in the RV. and AV., in spite of numerous allusions which can be explained in this way. The decision about these instances rests solely with the scholars, *i. e.* how far they are willing to go with the authors of the *Vedische Studien*, who have registered and explained these passages as proofs of widespread prostitution in the Ṛgvedic period. They have based their theory mainly on references to mythology.

In RV. I 123,10 the goddess Uṣas advances to meet the god who desires her (*i. e.* Sūrya or Agni) like a girl *(kanyā)* going to a lover. Smiling, youthful and resplendent, she unveils her breasts in front of him. It is stated there further that she shows her body like a young woman *(yoṣā)*, cleansed (or decked, *mṛṣṭā)* by her mother (ib. verse 11; cf. AV. VIII 6,1). Her breasts appear and she unveils her "dear things" *(priyāṇi*, *i. e.* her personal charms, RV. I 124,4; cf. X 86,5). The "cleansing" of the body may refer again to the use of some cosmetics. It is also said about her that she shows herself to everybody, be it a relative or a stranger (I 124,6) and, in the following stanza, she makes advances to men as a brotherless maiden; as a dancer *(gartāruk)* she appears on stage in order to obtain wealth; as a wife *(jāyā)* in beautiful clothes, desiring her husband; as a concubine *(hasrā)* she unveils her secret charms *(apsaḥ)*.[49]) In all these cases,

[48]) I found no information on these problems in sexuological literature, either.
[49]) or "breasts"; cf. Neisser, *s. v. apsas*; *abhrāteva puṃsa eti pratīcī gartārug iva sanaye dhanānām / jāyeva patya uśatī suvāsā uṣā hasreva ni riṇīte apsaḥ*, verse 7. Cf. RV. V 80,6: *yoṣeva bhadrā ni riṇīte apsaḥ*.

according to Geldner, a woman is meant who publicly discloses her sexual charms for profit (trsl. I 172-3 note); cf. the same in RV. V 80, 5-6.

It is doubtful whether we can regard these references as conclusive evidence; in some cases it is almost impossible. But first we would have to define precisely what we mean by the term "prostitute". If we take the word in its modern sense, *i. e.* a woman who offers her body to indiscriminate sexual intercourse for hire, then we shall hardly find parallels in the ancient societies. Further research in the oldest period will be needed to trace the origins of this institution. The mechanical transfer of modern ideas into the past will not help much in this case, either. More attention will have to be paid to the position of concubines, about whose status we are still in the dark and who were mixed with prostitutes in later sources.

Similarly, the goddess Rodasī goes with the Maruts secretly as a maiden *(yoṣā)* with men (RV. I 167,3). Here, the word *yoṣā* was again explained by Pischel as a prostitute;[50]) in the following verse, namely, the Maruts are said to go with Rodasī as with a "common woman", *uxor communis (sādhāraṇī)*.[51])

We are unable to make a precise distinction between various types of prostitutes and courtesans and, as a result, our translations of the corresponding terms are arbitrary. So *e. g.* the *puṃścalī* (lit. "running after men"), mentioned in AV. XV 2,1-5, is usually rendered as a "harlot". In the nuptial hymn AV. XIV 1,36 we find another type of prostitute. The Aśvins are asked by the officiating priest to favour the bride with the same seductive attractions as are offered by the buttocks of a courtesan, who is called there *mahānagnī*, lit. the "great naked woman". It seems, however, that most of these passages refer primarily to concubines who were later identified with professional prostitutes.

In any case, prostitution is an accessory phenomenon of every monogamic society, no matter whether the monogamic structure was based on social, religious or mainly economic grounds. The status of prostitution can vary directly with the degree of monogamy. This institution can play an important role in the development of erotics, owing to a practically unlimited choice of partners, varied sexual techniques and, last but not least,

[50]) in contradistinction to Oldenberg, GGA 1889, p. 7.
A mistress may be meant by the term *yoṣā* in AV. XIV 2,37: *marya iva yoṣām adhi rohayainām* "mount her as a lover his mistress", where Lanman suggests the full expression to be *adhi rohaya śepa enām*!
See also Pischel's interpretation of *bhadrā vadhūḥ* as "courtesan" (Ved. Stud. I, p. 309) in RV. X 27,12: *bhadrā vadhūr bhavati yat supeśāḥ*.

[51]) It hardly shows any "familiarity with the idea of polyandry recognized in the epic poetry of the Mahābhārata", as suggested by Max Müller *(Vedic Hymns* I, p. 227).

impending competition. With the tightening of marital bonds, the courtesan and, in a lesser degree the prostitute, becomes an important vent diverting various erotic tensions which would otherwise lead to disaster in the sexual life of unsuitably married couples. Hence, it is quite understandable that R. Pischel wrote in 1897: "Man wird sich allmählich an den Gedanken gewöhnen müssen, dass für den Inder die Hetären der Inbegriff aller Liebe sind". (Ved. Stud. II 322).

4. Phallic worship

There are two passages in the Ṛgveda which mention the *śiśna-devāḥ*. These were appraised unfavourably by the authors of the hymns. In one case Indra is besought not to let them approach the sacrifice (RV. VII 21,5), while in the other passage, he is said to have slain them after having won the treasure of the hundred-gated fort (RV. X 99,3).[52])

Alfred Ludwig was the first to translate the word *śiśnadevāḥ* as "Phallusverehrer" against Roth's interpretation as "geschwänzte Dämonen" (Zimmer 116). Since then, the term has been rendered as "those who have a phallus for their deity",[53]) *i. e.* phallus worshippers.[54])

It must be confessed, in any case, that the whole thing is not very clear. As we have seen, the phallus worship was widely spread in the Indus civilization and its outposts far away from the main centres. It could scarcely have died out before the Āryan invasion started, and it appears again in full swing at the time of the composition of the Mahābhārata, at least a few centuries B. C. Consequently, phallic worship could have survived the Āryan colonization and continued its existence as a kind of mushroom growth outside the official Vedic ritual and, at a favourable moment in the amalgamation of Āryan religion with the aboriginal cults, it might have come out of its temporary seclusion and asserted its claim within the flexible structure of the later Hinduism.

Unfortunately, there is a catch in these calculations. First, the Ṛgvedic Āryans did not know much about these "phallus worshippers", which is curious. The *śiśnadevāḥ* are in no way connected with any war enemies

[52]) see Macdonell, Ved. Mythol., p. 155.
mā śiśnadevā api gur ṛtaṃ naḥ, RV. VII 21,5, and *anarvā yac chatadurasya vedo ghnañ chiśnadevān abhi varpasā bhūt*, X 99,3.

[53]) "Schwanz-" oder Phallosgottheiten, Meyer III, p. 188. For further literature see Macdonell, l. c.

[54]) but sometimes in a quite different way. So *e. g.* H. Brunnhofer, who explained RV. X 99,3 as a hymn originated in Iran and translated *śiśna* as "Erbse", BB 26 (1901), p. 108—9.

of the Āryans. In the first passage, they are excluded from the sacrifice, while the second quotation comes from an obscure Indra myth, and the whole hymn in which it appears (RV. X 99) is full of unexplained allusions.

Secondly, the Vedic exegesis does not know anything at all about them. Yāska, whose great antiquity is proved beyond any doubt,[55]) explains the term as *abrahmacaryā* (IV 9) "unchaste", and this view has been adopted by Sāyaṇa whose opinion, however, can be dismissed as invalid, as he was well aware of the flourishing Śivaist phallic worship of his time.

The word *liṅga*, which is commonly used in the Hindu phallic worship, does not occur either in the RV. or AV.

Anyway, the term *śiśnadevāḥ* does not play any significant role in the Vedic cultural context and the above-mentioned problems, as well as the unusual grammatical form of the appelation (the tatpuruṣa possessive compound in plural), rather point to the fact that the term was originally applied to some unimportant and unidentifiable local practice.[56])

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We may conclude, therefore, this Chapter with the assertion that the Ṛgvedic society provided ample opportunities for the development of sexual relations, though on a limited scale and at a rudimentary stage. Sexual relations were furthered by the instinctive drives for the gratification of physiological needs which were kept apart from the social requirements of procreation. Prostitution as a social practice was, if any there, at an elementary stage of development.

[55]) M. Winternitz, HIL I, p. 69 note.
[56]) I have not seen the work of F. Kittel, *Über den Ursprung des Linga-Kultus in Indien*. Mangal. 1876 (quoted in Bibl. véd.).

CHAPTER IV

LANGUAGE

The study of erotic terminology presents numerous difficulties which are not easily overcome. Even a superficial glance at voluminous philological works and dictionaries reveals that, despite its obvious importance, the subject itself is inadequately represented in many of these basic works.[1])

It seems that even the few serious studies which exist in this field remain on the periphery of scientific recognition, as only occasional or unavoidable references to them may be found in the cognate literature.

Not that the words concerning sexual phenomena are unimportant or uninteresting. They comprise some of the oldest and most frequently used expressions in our vocabulary. But even the commonest words which denote the simple sex distinctions remain often unexplained on account of their ancient origin and widespread usage.[2])

Erotic terminology includes many words which we learn as soon as we are able to walk, long before we are old enough to realize their actual meaning. They are transmitted from generation to generation and they are familiar to everybody, irrespective of his (or her) education and social dignity. But not only that. Together with abusive speech and swearing,

[1]) It is highly commendable to go through the articles dealing with "erotics" in different Encyclopaedias, in order to get a better idea of the psychological approach of various nationalities to these problems. We find there substantially diverse reactions, ranging from the detailed German accounts up to a polite British silence. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (ed. 1960) does not register the word "erotics" at all!

[2]) Suffice to mention the Czech word *muž* "man", OSl. *mǫžь* which can be compared to Skt. *manuṣyaḥ*, but the origin of which is unknown, equally *lůno* "womb", OSl. *lono*, or *pyj* "penis", found already in OCz., the meaning of which is related to Skt. *puccha-* "tail" etc.

It is worth while mentioning that Slavonic languages abound in insults derived from incestuous relations, and it could be highly profitable to examine the oldest Indian idiom from this point of view as well. Perhaps we would find there many other connecting links between the two groups of Indo-European languages whose common features (especially in the sphere of vocabulary), attesting an early connection of these two families, have long been recognized. Cf. *e. g.* T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*. London 1955, p. 18—23.

they are among the first words a receptive traveller is likely to pick up in many foreign (especially Slavonic) countries.

In translating erotic terms we meet with considerable difficulties, too. We know very little about their real impact on the psychic propensities of the speaker. Many of these terms have assumed a vulgar connotation during the last few centuries.[3]) In modern languages the taboos on erotic terms have hardened and, consequently, the vast majority of these words are considered as "vulgar" today.[4]) The rich variety of the old colourful expressions has been replaced in some languages by a couple of depressing Latin terms and the interpreter of ancient texts has to reduce their richness to a few unpalatable *termini technici*. On the other hand, modern texts are almost void of vivid erotic expressions, which are avoided by many writers for social reasons and, therefore, we cannot study the frequency of such terms in modern literary documents either. To translate the ancient erotic terms means either to find new ways of expression in modern languages or, what is practised more often, to give up and adopt the generally approved use of evasive speech and roundabout terms.

The application of erotic terminology in Old Indian languages is almost completely unexplored, except for isolated studies on certain sexual terms, mostly from the viewpoint of comparative linguistics. Our short survey, therefore, is but an attempt to deal with them more systematically and to catch a glimpse of the psychological approach of the ancient Indians to those problems about which we do not know much in our own milieu.

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Man is named in various Vedic texts among other animals *(paśu)* as *primus inter pares*, and only exceptionally as their master.[5]) In classical

[3]) Cf. Cz. *děvka* originally = *dívka* "maiden", but now used in vulgar sense ("whore" or "harlot") etc.

[4]) If we want to say in modern Czech that a woman makes love to a number of men, we have no other choice but to apply to some vulgar expression. The recognized terms are very dignified nowadays: if a woman cohabits with a man, not being his wife, she is no longer a *kuběna* or *ženima* (cf. *žena* "woman", Skt. *gᵃnā*) "concubine", but his *družka* "companion" or even *milenka*, a word used both for a "lover" and "mistress".

The majority of words which are nowadays felt as "vulgar" can be, naturally, found in "dialects", where they can still pleasurably thrill us. Some of the most "obscene" expressions are used in their diminutive forms when addressing small children.

[5]) cf. Zimmer, p. 72—3.

Five sacrificial animals are frequently mentioned: the horse, the cow, the sheep, the goat, and man. Man is the first *(prathama)* of them; he is a biped *(dvipād-)* and one of those which take hold with the hand *(hastādānā-)*. See V. I. 1, p. 509—10.

Sanskrit, *puruṣa-paśu* is an expression used for a contemptible man who is very much akin to the beasts. The idea that man stands high above all other creatures is almost unknown in India. The Vedic Indians usually stress human mental abilities and regard man as the most resourceful species among all creatures. His sexual life does not substantially differ from theirs.

Accordingly, erotics in the Ṛgvedic period did not provide any conception that would idealize the refining element of emotions[6]) and the language of the oldest Vedic documents does not possess any expression equivalent to our word 'love'.

The term *kāmaḥ* is frequently used in the RV. hymns, but it never means "love" in the Vedic literature. Its prevalent meaning is "desire" in general, and "sensuous desire" in particular; it may also mean "urge" or "drive" (Trieb, PW). Then it is applied to the special sense of "carnal" or "sexual desire". In this connotation we might interpret the term *kāmaḥ* most appropriately as "lust". This meaning is predominate also in the later Sanskrit usage. Combined with the accessories of "lust", *kāmaḥ* finally assumes the same meaning as our term "erotics".

In the Ṛgvedic hymns, however, *kāmaḥ* has primarily the meaning of an unspecified longing or desire to procreate and to multiply, which is obviously the reflection of the breeding-urge. In other places it may express the instinctual drive aimed at the gratification of the sexual urge which has many characteristics in common with animal pairing or copulation. This urge is shared equally by both sexes and we read about a "woman's desire" as well.[7])

In the Atharvaveda we may witness a further development. The term *kāmaḥ* still means desire (AV. XIX 52[8])), without any specially erotic connotation (cf. RV. I 30,15), but sometimes it is already named among the gods (AV. XII 4,26). As a personification of sensuous desire in general, *kāmaḥ* is then raised to a position superior *(jyāyāṃs)* to all the other gods (AV. IX 2,19).[9])

[6]) as already noticed by Albrecht Weber, *Akademische Vorlesungen über Indische Literaturgeschichte*. Berlin 1876, p. 41.

[7]) *vadhvaḥ kāmaḥ*, RV. V 74,5.

Cf. *nadasya mā rudhataḥ kāma āgan* "the desire of the erect penis came to me", RV. I 179,4, and the phrase *kāmaṃ √kṛ* "to fulfill the desire", RV. X 61,6 *(abhīke kāmaṃ kṛṇvāne pitari yuvatyā)*.

[8]) suggested to be a later addition, Whitney II, p. 985.

[9]) In AV. III 29,7 *kāmaḥ* is presented both as the giver *(i. e.* inspirer or fulfiller) and receiver of desire. This dual function is ascribed to the god Agni who is identified with Kāma and called "the giver and receiver" *(yaṃ dātāraṃ pratigṛhṇantam āhuḥ*, AV. III 21,4). In AV. IX 2,6 and 24 Kāma is not only treated separately from Agni, but he is also invoked as superior to him and to the other gods.

Finally, in AV. III 25,1 foll., an allusion is made to the terrible arrow of *kāmaḥ*, feathered with longing *(ādhī)*, tipped with desire *(kāmaḥ)* and necked with determination *(saṃkalpaḥ)*. It dries up the spleen and pierces painfully, making the desired women creep gently to the man.[10]) But still, it is difficult to relate this desire directly to the idea of the later emerging Hindu god Kāma and his feathered arrows; the hymn has been addressed to the gods Mitra and Varuṇa who are expected to bring about the desired effect.

Nevertheless, we should not always think of a later development in the Atharvaveda. The term *kāmaḥ* might have found quite a different application in magic and sorcery than in the sacrificial ritual and poetry. It is possible, therefore, that it represents a parallel, though not necessarily a simultaneous tradition. There may be some connection between the later god of Love with his piercing arrows of glowing desire, and the ancient magic rituals of piercing the statuette of the beloved person with a pin or needle, the stylized miniature of an arrow.

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The gratification of carnal needs and sensuous desires was at the centre of the worldly interests of the Vedic people. The terminology relating to sexual life is very rich in expressions of both euphemistic and vulgar character (judged from our point of view). The main bulk of these words can be traced as far back as the prehistoric Indo-European community.[11]) We shall try to discover their mutual relationship and to group them according to their basic notions.

The erotic terminology found in the RV. and AV. may be roughly divided into three main categories:

1. The first group comprises words and ideas connected with agriculture and tillage. Natural phenomena and their relationship to fertilizing activities may be placed within the same category.

2. The second group of expressions and phrases is directly related to cattle-breeding and procreative abilities. The virile potency of the male and the idea of mating are predominant in this group.

[10]) 1. *uttudastvottudatu mā dhṛthāḥ śayane sve /*
iṣuḥ kāmasya yā bhīmā tayā vidhyāmi tvā hṛdi //
2. *ādhīparṇāṃ kāmaśalyām iṣuṃ saṃkalpakulmalām /*
tāṃ susaṃnatāṃ kṛtvā kāmo vidhyatu tvā hṛdi //
3. *yā plīhānaṃ śoṣayati kāmasyeṣuḥ susaṃnatā /*
prācīnapakṣā vyoṣā tayā vidhyāmi tvā hṛdi //

[11]) Cf. Carl Darling Buck, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages*. Chicago 1949, p. 278.

3. The third category includes expressions and concepts derived from physical and psychic phenomena of human activities and sexual relations. These terms have been inspired preponderantly by the physical act and the mental response accompanying the process of courtship and intercourse. They can be descriptive in nature, but very often they reveal elements of finer psychological observations based on an intimate knowledge of human sexual relations. Needless to say, the last-named category is the most important one for the promotion of erotic ideas and achievements.

1. Agriculture

The terms connected with tillage can be again divided into two main groups. The male element expresses the idea of sowing, piercing, striking etc., in association with the ploughshare representing the penis. In ancient times the plough consisted of a big thorn-like piece of wood or metal, and this idea has been expressed in words like *śepaḥ* "penis", Lat. *cippus* "stake, post", Engl. *prick* originally "pointed object",[12]) which have been derived by some scholars from a common root **phel-* "to split".[13])

As in other languages, the meaning of "penis" coincides with the idea of "tail": RV. VIII 1,25 speaks of a peacock's tail *(mayūra-śepaḥ)*[14]) and the name Śunaḥśepa, which occurs several times, originally meant "dog--tailed".[15]) A big (lit. "thick, increased") virile member *(bṛhacchepaḥ)*

[12]) cf. Cz. *píchati*, Lat. *pīnsere* "to crush" etc.; Buck, op. cit., p. 280.

[13]) Ludwig Sütterlin in IF 4 (1894), p. 104. The connection between *phālaḥ* "ploughshare" and the later √*phal* "to burst, split" (ib.) is no longer recognized; see Mayrhofer, *s. v.*

According to Meyer (III, p. 150, note 1) also *vajra* = penis in some cases.

[14]) cf. RV. X 105,2.

śepaḥ is the "seed-placer of the embryo" (*śepo garbhasya retodhāḥ*, AV. V 25,1). It desires the two hairy labia of female genitals (RV. IX 112,4) and, therefore, it should become big enough to satisfy the woman *(yathāṅgaṃ vardhatāṃ śepaḥ* "let the member increase limb by limb", AV. VI 101,1; cf. 72,1, where in verse 2—3 the term *pasas-* has been used). The word was also used in AV. magic rites against rivals: *evā bhinadmi te śepo 'muṣyā adhi muṣkayoḥ* "so do I split your penis [which is] on that woman's "little mice" (*i. e.* genitals), AV. VI 138,5. A similar phrase is not quite clear yet. In AV. IV 37,7 we read *bhinadmi muṣkau api yāmi śepaḥ* which Whitney translates "I split the testicles, I bind fast (?) the member", with an emendation to *dyāmi*. But neither √*dā* nor √*yā* is used with *api* elsewhere. He also suggests *abhi yāmi* "to attack", which is improbable. Perhaps we should read *api dhāmi śepaḥ* "I cover (conceal) the member"; the verb *api*-√*dhā* is commonly used in this sense elsewhere.

In AV. VII 113,1 we find the form *śepyāvant-*, lit. "tailed", m. a man of virile power (?); penîtus, PW.

[15]) In AitBr. VII 15,7 Ajīgarta names his three sons Śunaḥpuccha, Śunaḥśepa and Śunolāṅgūla; *śepa-* is used here as a synonym of *puccha-*. But neither *puccha-* nor *lāṅgūla-* occur in the RV.

is mentioned in AV. XI 5,12, while in RV. X 61,5 it is swelled to the utmost *(prathiṣṭa)*.

The activity of *śepaḥ* is expressed by various verbs: *ni-*√*tud* to pierce, thrust in (AV. VII 90,3); *anu-*√*bhṛ* to insert, introduce (AV. XI 5,12); √*dhā* to set, insert (AV. V 25,1); √*han* to smite (AV. VI 101,1); *pra-*√*hṛ* to thrust into (AV. XIV 2,38; cf. √*hṛ* RV. X 85,37).

The female share may be expressed in reverse terms. The earth, sometimes personified and often identified with a woman, is pierced *(ni-*√*vidh*, RV. I 164,8), tilled *(parā-*√*han*, RV. V 56,3) or beaten (√*han*, cf. ŚBr. XI 5,1,1) with the penis. The term *āhanaḥ* is also used for an unchaste woman, lit. "to be beaten" (or "punished") with the male member (RV. X 10,6,8).

Nevertheless, the female counterpart is most frequently depicted in terms of impregnation and fecundity, associated with the phenomenon of moisture and procreation. The phrases employed in this sense express the discharge of the sperm into the female womb or earth: *retaḥ* √*sic*, *anu-*√*ṣic* or *ni-*√*ṣic; reto* √*dhā*, *ā-*√*dhā*, *ni-*√*dhā* etc. (with f. in loc.); similarly *bījaṃ* √*vap* to sow seed etc. Compounds are also used in this connection: *retodhā* begetter (lit. "impregnating"), *suretaḥ* and *bhūriretaḥ* rich in semen or simply *retin-* id. "In the male, indeed, grows the seed; that is poured along into the woman" (AV. VI 11,2).[16])

The use of the phrase *retaḥ* √*sic* is sometimes obscure in the Vedic texts. In AV. XI 5,12 the Vedic student (? *brahmacārī)* pours the seed on the surface *(sānu)*, on the earth.[17]) According to RV. VII 33,13 the gods Mitra and Varuṇa, excited by the praises lavished on them during the sacrifice, emitted sperm together into a pot.[18]) The same happened to other gods and sages on various occasions.[19]) It is clear from these passages that the phrase was not applied to the ejaculation which set in during

[16]) Whitney's trsl.: *puṃsi vai reto bhavati tat striyāṃ anu ṣicyate.*
Cf. *uttānāyāṃ striyāṃ pumān retaḥ siñcati*, Kāṭh 20,6; *uttānāyāṃ ava bharā cikitvān* "being skilled (in the process), thrust it into her, lying spread out," RV. III 29,3. There are numerous phrases concerning the act of inserting the sperm or placing the embryo into a female: *paśau na reta ādadhat* (into a female animal), RV. IX 99,6; *dhātā garbhaṃ dadhātu te* "let Dhātar place your embryo", RV. X 184,1 = AV. V 25,5; *garbham ā dhehi yonyām* "set an embryo in the womb!", AV. V 25,8; *pitā duhitur garbham ādhāt*, RV. I 164,33 etc.
[17]) *brahmacārī siñcati sānau retaḥ pṛthivyām.*
[18]) *kumbhe retaḥ siṣicatuḥ samānam*; cf. *drapsaṃ skannam*, ib. verse 11, in connection with the birth of the sage Vasiṣṭha.
[19]) especially on seeing a beautiful maiden. Geldner comments it as "etwas menschliches" (?), Ved. Stud. I, p. 260.

a normal coition with a woman. It only marks the effusion of semen owing to a strong excitement. In another version of the same story, Mitra and Varuṇa emitted their sperm as soon as they perceived the beautiful nymph Urvaśī.

The female womb is likened to a cultivated field *(urvarā)* in which men sow their seed.[20]) She gives birth to progeny from her belly[21]) like the earth which yields fruit after being impregnated by rain, the heavenly sperm (p. 44). She is then "moist from impregnation" *(garbharasā*, RV. I 164,8) and the term *rasaḥ* "liquid substance" implies the meaning of seminal fluid as well as virility and vigour (cf. RV. I 105,2 etc.). A man deprived of his virility *(vṛṣṇyam)* is called a "sapless one" *(arasa*, AV. VI 138,3), *i. e.* vigourless (cf. AV. IX 2,10); *rasaḥ* is flowing out of Indra's generative organ *(śiśnād rasaḥ* √*sru*, ŚBr. XII 7,1,7).

The association of moisture *(snehaḥ)*[22]) with sexual desire and finally with affection and love[23]) has not yet developed in the Ṛgvedic period. Similarly, the likening of the woman to the field *(kṣetram)*, which has become very familiar later, only begins to take shape.[24])

2. Cattle-breeding

The terms derived from the animal realm relate mostly to the ideas of virility and sexual vigour. The expressions used to illustrate the sexual activity usually retain their original notion of vigorous mating or pairing. The words *vṛṣan-* and *vṛṣabha-* are applied equally to men and male animals, but primarily they signify the manly vigour of the potent bull, the symbol of procreative powers: "fury his testicles, progeny his virile member", AV. IX 7,13.[25])

[20]) "(As) a soulful cultivated field hath this woman come, in her here, O men, scatter ye seed," Whitney: *ātmanvaty urvarā nārīyam āgantasyāṃ naro vapata bījam asyām*, AV. XIV 2,14. Cf. ZDMG 22 (1908), p. 233.
[21]) *sā vaḥ prajāṃ janayad vakṣaṇābhyaḥ*, ib.
[22]) lit. "oiliness, greasiness, from √*snih* "to be adhesive or moist".
[23]) evolved from the basic meaning "adhesion", through the idea "to be fixed upon", and finally "to be attached to or fond of, feel affection for" (MW), but probably always connected with the pleasant feeling of moisture, wetness, with a sexual connotation.
[24]) *kṣetram* means only "field" in the RV., while *urvarā* retained the original notion of "fertile soil" throughout the later development; *snehaḥ*, on the other hand, does not occur at all in the RV. and AV., and √*snih* appears three times in the RV. (but not in AV.) in its causative form *(snehaya-* "to destroy") and as adj. *snīhiti*; see Grassmann, *s. v.*
[25]) Whitney's trsl.: *manyur āṇḍau prajā śepaḥ.*
The verb *abhi-*√*i* "to approach", *scil.* sexually, may be registered in this connection:

Various verbs are used in order to express the male activity: *sam-√at* to approach (RV. I 30,4) about a pigeon, *ud-√yam* to approach (RV. I 56,1) about a steed; *garbhaṃ √dhā* to place the embryo is used in connection with *vṛṣan-* (RV. III 29,1). Many such terms are attributed to the gods like Indra, Agni, Soma etc. The divine incest is illustrated by the verb *adhi-√skand* to cover in copulation (RV. X 61,7).

These words and phrases are used most frequently in various charms and spells aimed at the return or increase of virility: "mount, as it were a stag a doe, unrelaxingly always," exhorts AV. IV 4,7[26]) which was used for the recovery of manly vigour. Several magic spells, which imply the increase of the male member, use the word *pasaḥ* "male member", comparable with Lat. *pēnis*, Gr. *péos* (for *pésos)*; the term does not occur in the RV. Certain words used in these charms have not yet been identified. So *e. g.* AV. VI 72,2 lets the member grow great as is the member of *paras-vant-* (wild ass?) and *tayādara-* (?); in the following stanza the desired size of the member is likened to that of an elephant, ass and horse.[27])

The words denoting females *(mātā, goḥ, menā* etc.) are used promiscuously for women and cows, but always rather with poetic than erotic implications. The care of the offspring is their main duty and we cannot quote many examples of conspicuous sexual activities ascribed to them by the ancient poets. These terms, therefore, provide good evidence in support of our previous assertion (p. 77), that the gratification of sexual urge was not regarded as a mere preliminary stage to the function of parenthood.

The erotic terminology related to the sexual life of animals did not, on the whole, produce any striking innovations. It was confined to the sphere of virility and procreation and, consequently, was applied primarily to magic practices. In this sense it assumed an important position in the sacrificial and magic ritual (p. 108 ff.), but did not contribute much to development of refined erotic practices and ideas.

vṛṣeva patnīr abhy eti roruvat, RV. I 140,6 (about Agni); similarly when speaking about Soma who "approaches the cows", *i. e.* milk *(eti gā abhi*, RV. IX 72,3) etc. Cf. *tām abhyait* "he approached her", AitBr. III 33,1.

[2]) Whitney's trsl.: *kramasva rśa iva rohitam anavaglāyatā sadā*; id. VI 101,3; *rśa* should be read *ṛśya* (trsl., note). PW takes *sadā* as instr. of *sad-* "a position in coitus", which was refused by Whitney. Cf. *adhi skanda* "mount you!", AV. V 25,8.

[27]) *yathā pasas tāyādaraṃ vātena sthūlabhaṃ kṛtam /*
yāvat parasvataḥ pasas tāvat te vardhatāṃ pasaḥ, verse 2.
yāvad aṅgīnaṃ pārasvataṃ hāstinaṃ gārdabhaṃ ca yat /
yāvad aśvasya vājinas tāvat te vardhatāṃ pasaḥ, verse 3.

3. Human activities

The last group of erotic terms pertain to human activities or derive its inspiration directly from sexual relations between men and women. That is why a large number of these expressions can be found in other Indo-European languages as well, both in the euphemistic and the vulgar variety. In one way or another, these terms and phrases mean "to be familiar or intimate with, to embrace, to lie or sleep with, to have relations or intercourse with" etc.

The texts use, among others, these verbs: *ni-√gam* to approach somebody, *scil.* sexually (with acc., RV. X 10,12); *pari-√ṣvaj* to embrace (RV. X 10,13; 43,1); *ni-√pad* to lie down with (acc., AV. XIV 2,32); *śayane √śī* to lie in someone's bed (AV. XVIII 1,14) and some other verbs of unambiguous meanings, like *saṃ-√gam* to unite sexually with (instr., RV. VIII 91,4).

In this category we may also find poetic descriptions which refine the allusions to sexual intercourse. For example, when Yamī rebukes her brother who is unwilling to cohabit with her, she says: "Another woman shall enlace and embrace thee like a girdle, or as a creeper plant a tree."[28]) Or the poet might say: "the wife draws her husband to her" (RV. I 105,2),[29]) meaning equally the sexual union.

Different aspects of sexual gratification may be referred to by corresponding verbs: *√pṛc* is used when bodies are mingled or united: "unite your body with my body" (AV. XVIII 1,12),[30]) while *tanvam ā-√viś* means "to penetrate the body" (RV. X 10,3). It is interesting to note that touch is already recognized as one of the most important factors of erotic stimulation, much superior to sight,[31]) which is almost never alluded to.

[28]) OST V, p. 291: *anyā kila tvāṃ kakṣyā iva yuktam pari ṣvajāte libujeva vṛkṣam*, RV. X 10,13.

The past participles of *ā-√gadh* and *pari-√gadh* express coital embraces which cannot be specified any nearer: *āgadhitā parigadhitā yā kaśīkeva jaṅghe*, RV. I 126,6.

[29]) *ā jāyā yuvate patim.*

The idea of closeness of bodies has been expressed by the verb *upa-√pṛc*, which was used in RV. VI 28,8 and AV. IX 4,23 together with the noun *upaparcana-* (n.) "coition, impregnation". Cf. also the use of *saṃ-√pṛc* "to commingle, unite carnally' in AV. VI 74,1 *(saṃ vaḥ pṛcyantāṃ tanvaḥ* "let your bodies be united!"), and *saṃ√bhū* "to be united, cohabit with" *(patyā saṃ bhaveha"*, AV. XIV 2,32; *tāv iha saṃ bhavāva*, ib. v. 71). The verb *√viś* "to enter" (in coition) is used in RV. X 85,29 (= AV. XIV 1,25): *jāyā viśate patim.*

[30]) *tanvā me tanvaṃ saṃ pipṛgdhi.*

[31]) Cf. Thomas Hunt Morgan, *Heredity and Sex*. New York 1913, pp. 117,120.

"Loving wives caress a loving husband" (RV. I 62,11),[32]) *i. e.* they touch him or feel with the hand. The verb √*spṛś* is sometimes used with prepositions, especially *sam-* (p. 47), in order to express the intensity of the caressing, but also a perfect union based on the full contact of the bodies.[33]) Elsewhere the wives stir up the husband (*pra-*√*jinv*, RV. I 71,1). The intensity of handling or stroking is also expressed by *parā-*√*mṛś* (RV. I 126,7). Sometimes the "handling" may euphemize the intercourse. The gambler who deplores his ill-fated losses, complains that others are "handling" *(pari-*√*mṛś)* his wife (RV. X 34,4).[34]) The pleasure or enjoyment derived from it is alluded to by √*juṣ* (RV. I 95,6).

The verb *anu-*√*bhṛ* usually expresses the insertion of the penis (RV. X 61,5; AV. XI 5,12), but it may also denote similar manipulation performed with the hand (RV. IX 72,3); *ava-*√*bhṛ* "to press or thrust into" (RV. III 29,3) is used in the same sense. The opposite is expressed by the verb *apa-*√*ūh* "to withdraw" the member, or *ā-*√*vṛh* "to tear out" (RV. X 61,5). The phrase *hastam upa-*√*dhā* "to apply the hand" may mean the caressing of the female genitals before the penetration: "Mount thou the thigh, apply the hand; embrace thy wife with well-willing mind" (AV. XIV 2,39).[35]) Here again, *pari-*√*ṣvaj* means "sexual embrace" or union. When it is applied to women, it may mean the embrace performed by her legs or thighs.

The late Vedic √*yabh* "to cover, cohabit" was applied exclusively to the male activity. "Cover me" *(yabha mām)* says the woman in AV. XX 136,11; "nobody covers me" *(na mā yabhati kaścana*, TS. VII 4,19,2) etc. The verb probably had a strong passionate flavour even at that ancient period; it is used to the present day in Slavonic languages where it has a vulgar and insulting connotation.[36])

The verb √*nas* (med.) "to sport, copulate" may be used in a figurative sense. The songs of praise sport with Indra like the wives with their husband (RV. I 186,7; but cf. II 16,8 etc.). Above all, verbal compounds offered

[32]) *patiṃ na patnīr uśatīr uśantaṃ spṛśanti.*

[33]) It is not without interest that the Czech word *láska* "love" is connected with the verb *laskati* "to caress, fondle or feel with the hand", and not with the verb *milovati* "to love" (the noun is *milost* "grace, loving kindness").

[34]) *anye jāyāṃ pari mṛśanty asya.*

[35]) *ā rohorum upa dhatsva hastaṃ pari ṣvajasva jāyāṃ sumanasyamānaḥ.* Cf. *ā roha (yonim)* "ascend the womb!", AV. III 20,1, while RV. III 29,10 has *ā-*√*sad* in the same sense.

[36]) Cf. Cz. *jebati* "to cover", already in the oldest period, and Slov. *jebem ti mater* meaning "you are a whore's son" etc. (Machek, *s. v. jebati).*

inexhaustible possibilities of colourful expression and we may assert that the flexibility of the language largely contributed to the advancement of erotic terminology in the course of time.

The similes used in the description of sexual phenomena have been sometimes inspired by ordinary human activities. Several times the male member is prayed to become taut like a bow (AV. IV 4,6-7; VI 101,2-3).[37]) The insertion of the feather in the arrow-shaft also serves as a comparison revealing the work of effective skill: "let the virile organ, seed-placer of the embryo, set [it] like the feather on the shaft" (AV. V 25,1).[38]) Like a bowstring, the penis *(śepaḥ)* may be stretched *(ā-*√*tan)*, unstretched *(ava-*√*tan)*, stretched up *(ut-*√*tan)* or down *(ni-*√*tan)*, AV. VII 90,3. Similarly, AV. VI 22,3 speaks about thrusting the girl *(kanyā)* and shaking the wife *(jāyā)* by her husband *(pati)* and it is possible that the description was this time inspired by the shaking of a dice-holder.[39])

Coarse humour is sometimes resorted to when speaking about the penis as *kapṛt;* cf. the Vṛṣākapi Hymn (p. 58). In another song men are encouraged to lift it up *(ud-*√*dhā)*, to make it fixed *(*√*coday*, caus. √*cud)* and to thrust it *(*√*khud)* in order to win the prize (RV. X 101,12).[40])

The penis may be alluded to figuratively, but this occurs only seldom in the RV. It is called a "reed" *(nadaḥ = naḍaḥ)*[41]) and there is an

[37]) *dhanur ivā tānayā pasaḥ*, AV. IV 4,6 = VI 101,2; *āhaṃ tanomi te paso adhi jyām iva dhanvani* "I make thy member taut, like a bowstring on a bow", Whitney, in the following verse.

The word *pasas-* (n.) "penis" (Lat. *pēnis*, Gr. *péos*, fr. *pésos)* is used in AV. VI 72,3 in the same sense as *aṅga-* (n.), which we find in RV. X 85,30 (= AV. XIV 1,27): *patir yad vadhvo vāsasā svam aṅgam abhidhitsate (vāsasaḥ* and *abhyūrṇute*, AV.) "when the husband intends to cover (wraps, AV.) his own member with the bride's garment".

The provenience of such terms as *meḍhra-* (n. or m.) "penis" ("urinator") need not be discussed; cf. *api nahyāmy asya meḍhram*, AV. VII 95,3.

[38]) *śepo garbhasya retodhāḥ sarau parṇam iva dadhat.*

[39]) The suggestion was made by Whitney I, p. 297. The verse is corrupt and the translation has to be only tentative: *ejāti glahā kanyeva tunnairuṃ tundānā patyeva jāyā.*

The verb √*tud* with the meaning "to thrust or shake" (at the coitus) is found only in this passage.

[40]) *kapṛn naraḥ kapṛtham ud dadhātana codayata khudata vājasātaye.*

Another, but more difficult term of this kind is *bhraj-* (f.) which may denote a stiff, erect member: *mlāpayāmi bhrajaḥ śibhram* "I relax the vigour (?) of your stiff member", AV. VII 90,2.

In AV. IV 4,1 *mṛta-bhraj-* (adj.) has been used with the meaning "one who has lost the power of erection": *varuṇāya mṛtabhraje* ("for Varuṇa whose virility was dead", Whitney).

[41]) Grassmann and MW read *nadaḥ* "roarer, bellower", *i. e.* a bull or man.

Similarly *sakthi (sakthan-* n.) might have been used for "penis" in RV. X 86,7 *(sakthi me... hṛṣyati* "my thigh (or "rod", thigh-like penis) is thrilled"), while in VS.

interesting phrase used in RV. I 179,4, *viz.* "the desire of the erect member" *(nadasya rudhataḥ kāmaḥ)*. The appellation *vīrakarma-* "performing manly deeds" (RV. X 61,5) has not yet been satisfactorily explained. The penis may be stiff, stout *(sthūra-)* or it may hang down *(ava-√rambh)* like a boneless thigh *(anastha ūru*, RV. VIII 1,34). Or it may be a "club--like penis" *(vaitasa daṇḍa*, ŚBr. XI 5,1,1 explaining *vaitasa*, RV. X 95,4-5; see p. 100) or "peg-like" *(śāṅkura-, scil. śepaḥ*, AV. VII 90,3).

The names applied to female genitals usually stress their generative function: *yoniḥ* womb or *bhagă-* which has an erotic connotation "bestower" of amorous pleasure. Some of them may be felt as "obscene" by us; so *e. g. bhedaḥ* cleft, fissure (RV. IX 112,4), which appears again in VS. XXIII 28 as *aṃhubhedā-* "with a narrow slit" (J. Gonda, IIJ I (1957), p. 35-6). A bit of primitive anatomy may be seen in words like *upasthaḥ* lap (a place in the middle), against *avasthaḥ* penis (AV. VII 90,3). Very often, however, figurative speech is employed: *priyāṇi* "dear things" (RV. I 124,4) in the sense of female genitals; "do not think that (my things) are deficient" *(mā me dabhrāṇi manyathāḥ*, RV. I 126,7) where the author clearly avails himself of circumlocution. "I am hairy all over" *(sarvāham asmi romaśā*, ibid.) actually means 'my genitals are covered with pubic hair all over'. It is a woman who uses such expressions in the last two cases! A sorceress wants to split the member of her unfaithful lover on the other woman's "little mice" *(muṣkayoḥ*, AV. VI 138, 4-5), meaning genitals, too.

The restrained way of speech women use when discussing sexual matters has been studied by psychologists both with primitive tribes and cultured nations.[42]) The results of these studies show a striking similarity to the circumlocution found in the Vedic texts. Even nowadays women use practically the same expressions when talking among themselves about sexual functions, processes of evacuation etc.[43])

XXIII 29 it has been applied to the female organ (cunnus, PW): *sakthnā dediśyate nārī*.

[42]) T. Reik, op. cit., p. 587—602.

[43]) "We psychoanalysts are often surprised and sometimes puzzled by the indirect and often too delicate way in which women patients speak of sexual matters in their analytic sessions. Here are a few samples: "they live together" instead of they sleep together, "I had a good time" for I reached an orgasm, "he made such an effort, but he did not succeed" about a man who could not keep the erection of the penis, "he had not enough consideration for me" or "he is always in such a hurry" for premature emission". T. Reik, op. cit., p. 599. The author cites two of his French--speaking patients, young girls who developed a special way of expressing themselves when they spoke with each other. "The penis was called *l'affaire*, the vagina *la labyrinthe* and so on." l. c.

Among many primitive tribes men do not know the meaning of many expressions

The diversions in the language of men and women in ancient India have never been properly examined. The Ṛgveda Saṃhitā has preserved several hymns ascribed to women. These compositions may provide important clues to a better understanding of these problems. We may refer especially to the hymns ascribed to Ghoṣā, the daughter of Kakṣīvat (RV. X 39-41) where we have several passages using the same ornamental way of expression (*e. g.* X 40,9 about the impregnation etc.). The results of detailed studies of these passages might reveal some fundamental differences between the psychological approach of men and women to the problems of sexual relations and substantially contribute to our knowledge of ancient Indian erotics as well as psychology in general.

The woman lies on her back, spread out *(uttānā*, RV. III 29,3). She "opens" herself (*√śvañc*, RV. X 30,6), spreads out or parts her thighs *(sakthy ud-√yam*, RV. X 86,6; *ūrū vi-√śri*, act. AV. XIV 2,38; med. RV. X 85,37); the hairy (vulva) becomes expanded for the man *(tasya romaśaṃ vi-√jṛmbh*, RV. X 86,16-17). During coition the woman shakes to and fro *(ni-√dhū*, AV. I 14,2; *apacyavam upacyavaṃ √śikṣ* practises the shaking to and fro, RV. I 28,3) and makes counter-thrusts or answering movements (*prati-√cyu*, RV. X 86,6). The demons are thrusters-forth of women's buttocks (*strīṇāṃ śroṇipratodinaḥ*, AV. VIII 6,13). A woman *(yoṣā)*, after embracing *(pari- √ṣvaj)* her dear friend *(priyaṃ sakhāyam)*, shrieks *(śiṅkte)*as she lies spread out *(vitatā*, RV. VI 75,3). She is pierced with the penis *(śnathitā vaitasena*, RV. X 95,4-5).

These specimens of erotic terminology reveal a colourful variety of expressions and phrases which were used by the Vedic poets in depicting various sexual activities. Their language may sometimes seem to be too coarse and vulgar to our taste, which does not mean, however, that it appeared so to their contemporaries. At any rate, the usage of erotic terms was by no means primitive, naive or crude, as we sometimes believe. Much depends also on our capability and knowledge in interpreting the ancient idiom. On closer examination we may find out that the fault is sometimes in the restricted and inadequate means of expression provided by our modern languages.

women use. But even in cultured societies "men who spend some hours listening to women speaking among themselves feel that old urge to get away from it all although they understand every spoken word." op. cit., p. 602.

The use of the word *priyāṇi* is very instructive in this connection: *nodhā ivāvir akṛta priyāṇi* "as nodhas (?) has she revealed her dear things", RV. I 124,4; cf. *priyā taṣṭāni me kapir vyaktā vy adūduṣat*, RV. X 86,5. We may perhaps see the same sense in AV. XIV 1,21: *iha priyaṃ prajāyai te samṛdhyatām* "let us what is 'dear' be successful here for your offspring".

The impact of the powerful Vedic vocabulary can be substantially marred by vague expressions chosen by modern translators in their evasive rendering. Thus we should not be surprised to find the ancient Indians "embracing" each other all the time! Naturally, it is neither possible nor desirable to reproduce the original word for word in literally exact terms, but that does not absolve us from trying our best to find out new ways of expression,[44]) in spite of the obvious deficiencies of our present erotic vocabulary. For example, when we translate that the nymph Urvaśī was "embraced" by Purūravas three times a day, as most of the English-speaking interpreters do, we are doing no favour to the original which asserts that the young lady was "pierced with the penis" (*śnathitā vaitasena*, RV. X 95,4-5), which was later transcribed as "struck with a club-like penis" *(vaitasena daṇḍena hatād*, ŚBr. XI 5,1,1), in order to avoid any misunderstanding.[45])

A faithful and, at the same time, beautiful translation of such passages certainly belongs to the highest achievements of exceptionally talented scholars; though many are called, few are chosen. But it can be done! Here is an example: the fifth stanza of the well-known hymn of Purūravas and Urvaśī, one of the most beautiful poems in Indian literature, in the rendering of Louis Renou: "Oui, trois fois par jour tu me harcelais de ta verge, tu me comblais contre mon désir même. J'ai suivi tes desseins, ô Purūravas; homme, tu es devenu le roi de mon corps;"[46]) *triḥ sma māhnaḥ śnathayo vaitasenota sma me'vyatyai pṛṇāsi | purūravo'nu te ketam āyaṃ rājā me vīra tanvas tad āsīḥ ||*

Finally, there are two interesting comparisons related to sexual intercourse which are seldom met with in erotic literature. One of them is found in the famous dialogue of Yama and Yamī, the well-known Vedic twins (RV. X 10 = AV. XVIII 1). Yamī, who tries in vain to seduce her brother, invites him with these unusual words: "may we whirl off, like two chariot wheels"[47]) *(vi cid vṛheva rathyeva cakrā*, RV. verse 7 = AV. verse 8; similarly RV. v. 8 = AV. v. 9). This passage of the much commented hymn[48])

[44]) terms like "homelessness" (or better "houselessness") used nowadays commonly in books on Buddhism may serve as a good example.

[45]) Sāyaṇa quoting Yāska *(śepo vaitasa iti*, Nir. III 21) adds: *vaitaso daṇḍaḥ puṃvyañjanasya nāma.*

[46]) Louis Renou, *Hymnes et prières du Veda.* Paris 1938, p. 88.

[47]) Whitney's trsl.; "like car-wheels let us speed to meet each other", Griffith; "laissons-le rompre comme sous les roues du char!", Renou.

[48]) The dialogue itself, so often quoted as a specimen of erotic poetry, has very little erotic appeal. In spite of the author's intention to keep the scene vivid and the moral circumstantial, we observe the reverse: Yamī, a passionate young damsel burning with desire *(kāmamūtā)* tries in vain to seduce with her charms a man who is, above all, ostensibly afraid of the gods' punishment, and we are left wondering whether he is, under the circumstances, capable of being roused to any passions at all. A powerful flame of full-blooded desire on the part of his sister strangely contrasts

has not yet been fully explained. We find the use of *cakram* associated with sexual intercourse in another hymn of the same Book of the RV.

It is the controversial Mudgalānī Hymn (RV. X 102) which has been, for many years, studied and explained in many different ways.

The story itself is quite simple. Indrāṇī, a young spouse of the old ṛṣi Mudgala (called also Mudgalānī) has won a chariot-race on behalf of her husband. The spectators praise her skill but, at the same time, they commiserate the fair, courageous heroine, for having to be content with the old impotent Mudgala. Finally, they allude to their own superior qualities, in case they should be put to the test.

Some scholars have challenged the conclusions implied by Geldner's interpretation and analysis.[49]) The adherents of the mythological theory even denied the possibility to interpret the hymn correctly on the grounds that the preserved material is insufficient for drawing any definite conclusions.[50]) Others, who agreed with Geldner in details, refused to accept his conception of the song and explained it as a personal satire, originated on the spot of the event and for a long time preserved in the memory of the eye-witnesses.[51])

Whatever may be the origin of the hymn, it is an appealing piece of ingenious and naive, even if not at all primitive (!), poetry. The beautiful maiden presents a welcome spectacle as the wind blows up her clothes (verse 2), and the delighted spectators lavishly spend their praise on the heroine of swelling breasts *(pīpyānā)* whom they call a *parivṛktā*, *i. e.* a wife slighted by her husband, but this time not on account of her sterility, but of her husband's old age and ascetic inclinations which lead to his impotence. They assert, however, that she has again obtained her husband

to the complete submission of all personal feeling to the demands of the law-givers on her brother's behalf. To read more "erotics" beyond this impression into the hymn is somewhat questionable.

[49]) for details see Ved. Stud. II, p. 14—16.

[50]) See M. Bloomfield, *Contribution to the interpretation of the Veda.* ZDMG 48 (1894), p. 541—79. He explains Mudgalānī as a personified missile (or army) of Indra and believes in a genuine mythological background of the whole hymn (p. 552), which he regards as a war-hymn with allusions to Indra's liberation of waters from the clouds (p. 563). Bloomfield closes his sharp criticism of Geldner's interpretation with words that absolve him from further obligations: "We may safely assert that this hymn will figure in the final irresolvable remnant of the Veda, unless a new accession of materials should enrich our present apparatus for its reconstruction." (p. 563).

Oldenberg (II, p. 318) calls for "größere Einfachheit, weniger Gesalzenheit".

For a different mythological concept see A. Bergaigne, *La religion védique d'après les hymnes du Rig Veda.* Vol. II., Paris 1881, p. 280 ff.

[51]) P. v. Bradke, *Ein lustiges Wagenrennen in Altindien, RV. 10,102.* ZDMG 46 (1892), p. 445—65. In a Note, appended to the article, v. Bradke rejects also Geldner's interpretation of the Vṛṣākapi hymn (RV. X 86) and explains it in a similar way (p. 465).

like one who "waters with a poor pump" *(kūcakreṇeva siñcan)*, lit. "who sprinkles (water) with a bad wheel" *(scil.* from a well.)[52]) They add, moreover, that they would like to be victorious with the impetuous one, *viz.* they would appreciate trying a ride with her (verse 11).

The term *cakram* "wheel" was frequently employed in the Indian symbolism, but we are ignorant of its erotic implications in the Ṛgvedic period. It may be connected here with the preceding chariot-race as well as with some sexual activity, the nature of which cannot be fully ascertained.[53])

But the most interesting idea combined with the process of copulation has been preserved in RV. I 179,4 where we meet with a highly unusual formulation. It is said there, namely, that Lopāmudrā (see p. 65) "sucks out" or "milks" the groaning man *(lopāmudrā vṛṣaṇaṃ dhayati śvasantam)*. The use of the verb √*dhe* "to suck out" is certainly curious at first sight, but the idea behind it is quite original and sound. It can be corroborated by a quotation from the AV., where the woman bears the "milked" *(dugdha-)* sperm *(retaḥ)* of the virile male *(ṛṣabha*, AV. XIV 2,14). The use of the verb √*dhe* was probably inspired by ideas governing the second group of our classification of erotic terms (p. 93); it has been also applied to the extraction of the soma juice where the milk added to the beverage is often identified with cows. The metaphor is, as far as I can see, an unmistakable, even if elementary, sign of recognition of woman's active role in sexual relations. The idea of a woman „milking" the man during coitus gets an appropriate expression in RV. I 105,2. Trita, a very old and already obscure god in the RV., describes the pleasures of the night (in Geldner's translation): "Die ein Bedürfnis haben, (kommen) zu ihrem Bedürfnis.Die Frau zieht den Gatten an sich. Beide ergiessen das brünstige Nass; sie gibt ihren Saft hin und melkt (den Mann) aus" *(artham id vā u arthina ā jāyā yuvate patim / tuñjāte vṛṣṇyam payaḥ paridāya rasaṃ duhe vittam)*. The man is entirely exhausted after the intercourse; he feels pain in the ribs (verse 8), caused by his wife's stormy passion (cf. RV. X 33,2). There can be hardly any doubt as to who called the tune in this case.

[52]) and yet obtains water.
v. Bradke translates: "die Frau mit [der vollen Brust] den üppigen Formen vergoss [statt Milch zu geben] Schweiss, als schöpfte Jemand mit dem Brunnenrad den Brunnen aus." (op. cit., p. 453).
The word *kūcakra-* (n.) is virtually a *hapax legomenon* which can be interpreted in various ways; so *e. g.* Roth translates it as "female breast" (PW).

[53]) Cf. RV. I 155,6 (see p. 49). The idea is probably connected with a rolling movement; cf. RV. IV 31,4.

CHAPTER V

RITUAL AND SPECULATION

1. Introduction

The account of sexual life in the late Vedic period remains fragmentary. The Saṃhitās of Yajur and Sāmaveda, which were compiled for special liturgical purposes, are nothing else than books of the prayers and songs of certain priests who were in charge of the sacrificial procedure. Everything contained in these two collections was subordinate to their specialized interest. Any information on other matters outside the priestly doctrine is strictly limited.

The Saṃhitās of the Yajurveda consist of various strata of different age and varying value. A large portion of their text is made up of Ṛgvedic stanzas adapted to the needs of the sacrificial ritual. Freely interspersed among them are numerous prayers, formulas and litanies which were used in various rites and ceremonies. The Saṃhitās of the Black Yajurveda(Kāṭhaka, Maitrāyaṇī and Taittirīya S.[1])) include the Brāhmaṇas which deal with the sacred science and expound theological theories relating to the descriptions of various rites. The Brāhmaṇas are virtually commentaries which later became independent in the other Vedic Saṃhitās.

The most important among the old Brāhmaṇas are: the Aitareya and Kauṣītaki (or Śāṅkhāyana) Brāhmaṇa which belong to the Ṛgveda, and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa of the White Yajurveda. This "Brāhmaṇa of the Hundred Paths" is the most extensive and most important Brāhmaṇa on account of its varied contents and numerous myths and narrations which illustrate the rites or explain their origin and purpose.

To date the "Brāhmaṇa period" is impossible beyond the assertion that these texts are younger than the Ṛgveda and most of the other Saṃhitās. Among them, the Brāhmaṇas of the Black Yajurveda (Taittirīya Br. and prosaic portions of the other Saṃhitās) are considered to be the oldest. But, on the whole, the Brāhmaṇas are in accord as to the essentials of their contents and present a consistent picture of the later stages of Vedic civilization.

The Āraṇyakas or "forest texts" are actually mixed selections from the Brāhmaṇas designed for symbolic and mystical explanations of ritual ceremonies.

[1]) the *Kapiṣṭhala-Katha Saṃhitā* has been preserved only in fragments.

The Upaniṣads, which are closely related to the Āraṇyaka portions of the Brāhmaṇas, are either included in the Āraṇyakas or appended to them. They form "the end of the Veda" *(vedāntaḥ)*, on account of their late origin as well as their philosophical and mystical contents, which was later explained as the culmination and final aim of the Veda. Only six of them[2]) represent the earliest stage of the Upaniṣadic literature and are recognized as the original Vedānta. Later on, countless works of philosophical or religious (mainly sectarian) character were given the same title, though they are mostly in no way connected with the ancient Vedic lore.

The compilation of the oldest Upaniṣads probably coincides with the appearance of Buddhism, though we have not sufficient reasons to believe that their doctrines were interrelated. It seems more probable that they derived their inspiration from some common source prevalent in the Indian thought of that period. The date of the latest Vedic Upaniṣads and, accordingly, the date of the final stages of the *śruti* literature in general, is usually placed round about the middle of the first millennium B.C.

The ritual was carefully studied and expounded in various Vedic schools. They treated systematically separate aspects of the sacrifice as well as of the Vedic hymns and their language. In the course of time, these schools developed more separately and finally established themselves as independent and, in many cases, secular scientific disciplines. Six schools were originally recognized as supplementary Vedic sciences. They included phonetics, ritual, grammar, etymology, metrics and astronomy. The schools used special texts called the *Sūtras*, lit. "threads", then "rules" or collections of such rules, *i. e.* "manuals" composed in a specially condensed style designed for memorization. Although these works are not recognized as a supernatural revelation *(śrutiḥ)*, but as human achievements, the Sūtras dealing with the ritual are closely connected with the Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas and have to be studied together with them. All these works represent a continuous line of priestly tradition which derived its existence from the Vedic ritual. As the main bulk of this literature belongs to the Post-Vedic period, its systematic study has to be deferred to a later occasion.

Whereas the Upaniṣads still enjoy widespread popularity (though much less among scholars), detailed studies of the tedious Brāhmaṇa texts are quite rare exceptions. Wilhelm Rau's book *Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien* (Wiesbaden 1957) is the only reliable account of Vedic society based on this edifying, but somewhat unpalatable lecture.[3])

2. Society

Sexual life in the Brāhmaṇa period remains practically unexplored. The authors of the Brāhmaṇa texts were interested almost exclusively in

[2]) The *Aitareya*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Taittirīya*, *Kauṣītaki* and *Kena Upaniṣads*. Another eight Upaniṣads are traditionally added to them as the latest offshoots of Vedic literature. See HIL I, p. 237 foll.

[3]) Unfortunately for us, W. Rau has intentionally avoided the erotic issues, as he was interested solely in the legal position of women at that period (op. cit., p. 40, note 1).

the sacrificial doctrine and we cannot expect to find in their liturgical manuals topics that were not connected with the Vedic sacrifice. On the other hand, we may be sure that all the concomitants of the ritual were given fair treatment, whatever their original purpose might have been.

It appears that no substantial changes took place in the sexual relations since the Ṛgvedic period, in spite of the acknowledged radical shifts in the economic, social and geographical pattern of Vedic society.

The patriarchal rule over the family seems to have been strengthened and the privileges of the husband tightened his grip of the marital bonds. Social, economic and religious motives played a major part in the choice of marriageable partners and, according to the Gṛhya Sūtras,[4]) the qualities of the bride and bridegroom were scrutinized very carefully.

The wedding ceremonies were now prescribed in the minutest details, which involved numerous hardships for the young couple. They had to spend three nights in continence. They slept on bare ground and had to avoid spiced meals etc. On the fourth night the intercourse was performed to the accompaniement of magic and love spells.

However interesting such provisions might seem, they are not to be taken for granted too quickly. For example, the three-days' continence sounds reasonable enough, but only as long as we do not acknowledge that there are other texts which prescribe much longer waiting-periods (up to one year). When we appraise these prescriptions from our own point of view, we are apt to jump to the conclusion that the three-days' stipulation was the original one, while "later on" the time-limit was arbitrarily extended and impossibly exaggerated. However, this is a mere conjecture which cannot be supported by any textual evidence. It does not bring us any nearer to the real state of things and we are still in the dark as to what extent these rules are products of wishful thinking.

In the Brāhmaṇa period "monogamy" was widespread, mainly for economic reasons: kings and spiritual teachers (owing to gifts) usually had more wives; two was the standard (often only craved for), four was the limit.[5]) Women *(strīyaḥ)* became the possession of their husbands. They had to bear children and had no right over their bodies.[6]) Adultery

[4]) directions for usages, ceremonies and sacrifices of domestic character. See Alfred Hillebrandt, *Ritual-Litteratur. Vedische Opfer und Zauber*. Strassburg 1897, p. 20 foll. (Grundriss III. 2.).

[5]) Rau, op. cit., p. 40 foll. We are following his excellent exposition in the historical part of the Chapter.

[6]) Yet, in certain cases they were perhaps allowed to leave their husbands and to find others.

was therefore viewed as an offence against the husband's property. Child marriages are not attested in the Brāhmaṇa literature.

That is nearly all we learn about the married life in the Brāhmaṇa period. A new term appears in the language of the texts. The word *bhārya-* which had been used with the meaning "maintained, a dependant" (cf. *bhartṛ-* "maintainer") in the older Brāhmaṇas, was replaced by *bhāryā* "wife", *i. e.* "who has to be maintained" in the latest phase of the period (Rau 36). It has to be noted that the word *bhāryă-* does not occur in the RV.-AV.; both forms appear only in the TS. and the Brāhmaṇas.

As might be expected, adultery was no exception. The punishment was left to the husband, who appears to have exercised absolute powers over his women. Intercourse with concubines seems to have been fairly widespread and not regarded as a social disgrace. W. Rau quotes (p. 98) an interesting Brāhmaṇa advice to the husband how to bewitch the lover of his wife — "if one really hates him" (*taṃ ced dviṣyāt*, ŚBr. XIV 9,4,11 etc.). We may be sure that the author giving such advice did not intend to be funny in the least. We can only repeat our previous assertion (p. 77) that potency and sexual vigour in ancient times cannot be looked upon as a quality inherent in the primitive people. But even in the classical literature we have sufficient proofs of a benevolent and even cheerful attitude on the part of impotent husbands towards their virile rivals whose sexual vigour provided the householders with the desired offspring.

The most despised form of adultery was that of a pupil with his teacher's wife already in the Brāhmaṇa period. The abhorrence of such an abominable crime is easily explicable. First, this kind of adultery threatened the authors of the admonitions themselves. Secondly, their repeated warnings show that their fears were not unfounded.

In a rite called Varuṇapraghāsā,[7]) the wife of the sacrificer was questioned by one of the officiating priests (the *prativibhāgī*) with whom she lived or whether she lived with anybody else than her husband. She had to give the names or number of her lovers (according to the commentary) or, if she were unwilling (out of shyness etc.), she had to pick up as many grass blades as she had lovers. The god Varuṇa was supposed to seize those she named. She had to speak the truth, otherwise misfortune befell her kin or her most beloved one would die. Without denying the ritual motivation of such an inquiry, we may safely assert that the existence of the wife's

[7]) the second of the periodical oblations offered at the full moon of Āṣāḍha for obtaining exemption from Varuṇa's snares (MW). The name was derived from eating barley in honour of the god Varuṇa.

lovers was at least admitted as a possibility here. In this connection, the verb √*car* has been used for the first time in the sense "to practise intercourse" with *(anyasya satyanyena carati (strī)*, ŚBr. II 5,2,20; cf. XIV 7,1,17).

We know very little about the internal affairs of a Brāhmaṇa household, but we have reasons to believe that the family was governed by laws similar to the later joint family of the Hindus. A quotation from AitBr. (III 22,7) might help us to get a better idea of the situation. It is said there quite occasionally that the daughter-in-law keeps hiding before her father-in-law *(snuṣā śvaśurāl lajjamānā nilīyamānaiti)*. It is doubtful whether the part. *lajjamānā* implies that she was hiding out of modesty, as interpreted by Keith[8]), or because she was bashful (schüchtern), as suggested by Rau (42). √*lajj* almost always implies "shame" or "embarrassment" and the context shows that "confusion" is actually meant here. It seems more likely, therefore, that her evasive behaviour towards her father-in-law was not always motivated by her deep respect for him. Again, we should not think of a "father-in-law" as an old man only. Sexual motivation is more clearly implied in the abusive use of the word "brother-in-law" in modern Indian languages. Finally, in AV. VIII 6,24 we read about the demons who creep away from the sun, as a daughter-in-law creeps away from her father-in-law.

The use of magic spells and love charms was very popular in the Brāhmaṇa period. Most Brāhmaṇas and Gṛhya Sūtras contain numerous spells and directions how to use them.[9]) It seems that sorcery and magic practices were at the zenith of popularity, apart from the expensive cults of priestly sacrifices.[10]) Women who deal in love charms are mentioned in VS. XXX 9.

Magic ideas were sometimes combined with sexual taboos in order to heighten the effects of these rites. Nakedness was one of the taboos prevalent already in the Brāhmaṇa period. Accordingly, some of the love charms and magic rites had to be performed naked.[11]) Equally, the wives *(bhā-*

[8]) *Rigveda Brahmanas: The Aitareya and Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda.* Cambridge, Mass. 1920, p. 179 (HOS Vol. 25). Cf. J. v. Negelein, WZKM 16 (1902), p. 100—2, and B. Liebich, WZKM 27 (1913), p. 474—7.

[9]) See Hillebrandt, p. 185, with bibliographical references.

[10]) Records of expensive gifts to the sacrificing priests *(dakṣiṇāḥ)* began to grow in number and extent. They often included women: four women *(jāyā)*, one maiden *(kumārī)* and four hundred maid-servants *(anucāriṇī)* were given according to ŚBr. XIII 5,4,27. Sometimes these girls were of good *(i. e.* wealthy) families *(ādhya-duhitaraḥ)*; ten thousand daughters of wealthy men were given as a gift *(dakṣiṇā)* according to AitBr. VIII 22,6.

[11]) According to the commentaries the rite performed with AV. IV 5 (in order to put a woman to sleep) and AV. VI 77 (when the woman wants to run away). See Hillebrandt, p. 185. On the other hand, the intercourse performed at the new- or full moon may cause impotence in men (TS. II 5,6,4).

ryāḥ) of the sacrificer are "not likely to become naked" *(anagnaṃbhāvukā*, AitBr. I 29,20). The removal of dress begins to assume a distinctive social function: in the Brāhmaṇa period the poorer *(pāpīyān)* was made to uncover himself in the presence of a rich *(śreyān)*.[12]) This custom, which occurs in the later caste society as well, may reflect the magic idea that dress is a part of one's personality. Therefore it must share in the duties imposed on the natural body.[13]) The removal of dress or of part of it is an expression of humiliation or debasement of one's personality (and not a removal of protective covering as a sign of respect, as is often maintained).

The ritual texts allude to a number of dancers, singers, prostitutes etc. VS. XXX 5 foll. mentions an unchaste woman *(ayogū)*, a harlot, a mistress etc. These references usually lead to the conclusion that prostitution was fairly common in the Brāhmaṇa period. This is hard to believe, that is to imagine that prostitution could have flourished on a major scale within the society which did not know cities or towns in our sense of the word. And we know that the Vedic people were definitely without them. The names of certain communities, which are usually described as "towns", do not tell us anything about their actual size. The word *nagaram* appears in the latest portions of the Brāhmaṇa texts and, even there, we are in the dark about their extent (Rau 126, note 5). We may conclude, therefore, that the "common women" or "prostitutes" mentioned in the texts mostly belonged to the troupes of professional dancers, singers and artists who travelled all over the country visiting festivals, weddings and religious gatherings and practising occasional sexual intercourse for an appropriate reward.

Prostitution as a social practice professionally established in the village communities is highly improbable.

3. Ritual

The whole atmosphere of the Vedic sacrifice is permeated with notions of fertility cults which stipulate a considerable part of the sacrificial procedure. As a result, the liturgical terminology makes frequent use of ambivalent terms related to cosmic as well as human procreation and fecundity, but it is immensely difficult to ascertain their erotic connotation.

[12]) Rau 32, quoting Kāṭh. 24,6.
[13]) The custom of dressing the dead was based on similar associations; see ERE *s. v.* Dress.

Thus, for example, the verse *(ṛc-)* which is accompanied by a melody *(sāman-)* during the Vedic recital, is conceived as *yoni* (womb) of the melody that has originated out of it. The Brāhmaṇas further elaborate such ideas frequently found in the liturgical Saṃhitās. They speak of their mutual relation as of a relation between a woman and her husband (ŚBr. VIII 1,3,5), who are longing for each other; from their intercourse *(mithunam)* Indra was born (ib. IV 6,7,11).

The construction of the sacrificial altar is also related to the union of a woman *(yoṣā)* with a man *(vṛṣan-)*: "The two shoulders (of the altar) he carries along both sides of the (Āhavanīya) fire. For the altar *(vedi*, fem.) is female and the fire *(agni*, masc.) is male; and the woman lies embracing the man: thereby a copulation productive of offspring is obtained. For this reason he carries the two shoulders (of the altar) along both sides of the fire. (15) It (the altar) should be broader on the west side, contracted in the middle, and broad again on the east side; for thus shaped they praise a woman: 'broad about the hips, somewhat narrower between the shoulders, and contracted in the middle (or, about the waist).' Thereby he makes it (the altar) pleasing to the gods. (16)"[14])

Similarly, the kindling of the sacred sacrificial fire (see p. 48) is further discussed in terms of coition of the two friction-sticks,[15]) which are identified with Purūravas and Urvaśī, the ancient pair of eternal lovers (VS. V 2). One of the formulas employed was, "you are Urvaśī" *(urvaśy asi)* and another, "you are Purūravas" *(purūravā asi)*, the former denoting the lower *(adharāraṇi)*, and the latter the upper piece of wood *(uttarāraṇi)*, by the friction of which the fire was to be produced. The commentator on VS. explains: "As Urvaśī lies under King Purūravas for sexual enjoyment, so you are placed underneath."[16])

The idea of divine incest, which is alluded to in the Saṃhitās (p. 45), has been treated more extensively by the Brāhmaṇas. Prajāpati, "the lord of creatures", has an important place in the later brāhmanic speculations

[14]) *The Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, trsl. by Julius Eggeling. Part I. Oxford 1882, p. 63. (SBE Vol. XII):
15. abhito 'gnim aṃsā 'unnayati | yoṣā vai vedir vṛṣāgniḥ parigṛhya vai yoṣā vṛṣāṇaṃ śete mithunam evaitat prajananaṃ kriyate tasmād abhito'gnim aṃsā 'unnayati || 16. sā vai paścād varīyasī syāt | madhye saṃhvāritā punaḥ purastād urvyevam iva hi yoṣāṃ praśaṃsanti pṛthuśroṇir vimṛṣṭāntarāṃ sā madhye saṃgrāhyeti juṣṭām evainām etad devebhyaḥ karoti. We learn from similar accounts that during the intercourse the man lay at the right side of his spouse; Kāṭh. 20,6,9; ŚBr. I 1,1,20; II 5,2,17 etc.; Tāṇḍya Br. VIII 7,10.
[15]) This feature is known in other parts of the world too; cf. HIL I, p. 179, note 3.
[16]) OST III, p. 46, note 52: *yathā urvaśī purūravo-nṛpasya bhogāya adhastāt śete tadvat tvam adho'vasthitā'si.*

and his incest with his daughter is often mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas and later on in the Purāṇas, collections of ancient myths and stories. It is attested in ŚBr. I 7,4,1 foll. where Prajāpati is said to have been overcome by desire ("may I copulate with her") and so had overpowered her *(mithuny enayā syām' iti tāṃ sambabhūva)*. Also in AitBr. III 33,1: "Prajāpati felt longing after his own daughter, some say the sky, others Uṣas. Having become a stag he approached her in the form of a deer."[17]) In some places of the Brāhmaṇas the gods are endowed with passionate desires and strong erotic inclinations (cf. ŚBr. IV 1,5,1), though not expressed in the same frank terms as in the Saṃhitās.

Incest of brother and sister or father and daughter is indicated several times in the Saṃhitās (cf. RV. X 85,29-30,35; 162,5; AV. VIII 6,7 etc.). The Brāhmaṇas also refer to the practice of incest on several occasions. In AitBr. VII 13 we read: "A sonless one cannot attain heaven," all the beasts know this; therefore a son his mother and his sister mounteth. This is the broad and auspicious path along which men with sons fare free from sorrow; on it beasts and herds gaze, for it they unite even with a mother."[18]) The old Vedic drive expressed in the desire of offspring can be again traced here.

The language of these passages widely differs from the old erotic expressions used in the RV. and AV. It is very simple and is practically made out of a few stereotypes which repeat themselves again and again. The term *maithunam* gets a universal recognition in the Brāhmaṇa period. Its history is very interesting. It appears in the RV. in the adjective form from √*mith* "to meet, unite", and it has the meaning "paired, forming a pair". It is used there mostly in connection with natural phenomena and celestial beings (the pairs Heaven and Earth, Day and Night, Yama and Yamī, the Aśvins) or it may denote the couples of sacrificers. Its association with religious ideas is quite obvious, but it is never used in the sense of "copulation" in the RV.

In AV. VI 141,2 we have an interesting application of the term *maithunam*, *viz.* in the making of a pair *(mithunam)* on the ears of calfs. The

[17]) *prajāpatir vai svāṃ duhitaram abhyadhyāyad, divam ity anya āhur uṣasam ity anye. tām ṛśyo bhūtvā rohitam bhūtām abhyait.* See H. Oertel, *Contributions from the Jāiminīya Brāhmaṇa.* Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol. XV (1909), p. 173.

[18]) A. B. Keith, op. cit., p. 300—1:

12. nāputrasya loko 'stīti tat sarve paśavo viduḥ |
tasmāt tu putro mātaraṃ svasāraṃ cādhirohati ||
13. eṣa panthā urugāyaḥ suśevo yam putriṇa ākramante viśokāḥ |
tam paśyanti paśavo vayāṃsi ca tasmāt te mātrāpi mithunībhavantīti.

commentary explains *mithunam* as *strīpuṃsātmakaṃ cihnam* which would mean "marks resembling female and male genitals" — "a bit of symbolism most interesting to the student of folk-lore," commented Whitney.[19]) It reminds us of the curious love adventure of Indra with the demoness (p. 55), where we met with a similar kind of symbolism. In any case, the word *mithunam* again stands for a "pair", and in this sense it is used in the AV. also with regard to a married couple (AV. VIII 3,12 etc.). Nowhere is the idea of "pairing" or "copulation" clearly implied.

This could mean that the derivations of √*mith* did not originally have any erotic connotation. Later on their meaning might have been modified or, what is perhaps more feasible, they might have been introduced in the new sense by the Vedic schools and gradually adopted for general use in the Post-Vedic period when they were universally applied to the sexual intercourse.

Some of the Vedic sacrifices were virtually accompanied by sexual union as a concomitant of the sacrificial procedure. The ritual copulation was performed during the *Mahāvrata* ceremony and the *Aśvamedha* or the great Horse sacrifice. In both cases the sexual activity was associated with fertility cults designed to stimulate human and animal procreative powers.

According to Keith,[20]) the Mahāvrata was a ritual of the Winter solstice which combined within itself the characteristics of a spell to procure the heat of the sun and the fall of rain, so as to bring about fertility for the land, while more directly still it was designed to further productiveness in man and animals.

During the ritual, "intercourse of creatures and a conversation between a student and a courtesan" took place *(bhūtānāṃ ca maithunaṃ brahmacāripuṃścalyoḥ saṃpravādaḥ*, AitĀr. V 1,5). The ritual intercourse was performed under a cover. It has been suggested that originally more couples took part.[21]) The magic and symbolic implications of the act are clearly perceptible[22]) and need not be discussed here. The same may be said about the verbal contest and coarse jokes accompanying the

[19]) Whitney I, p. 387 note. But even here, *mithunam* means nothing else than "pair"; cf. MS. IV 2,9. The mark probably served as a magical device to secure fertility. See V. I. I, p. 46.

[20]) op. cit., p. 85.

[21]) "The plural in the Ait. suggests that the ritual involved the union of more pairs than one, representing the different sides of animal life." Keith, op. cit., p. 79 note 6. According to TS. VII 5,9,4 "there are a pair *(mithunau)* united within the sacrificial ground." A. B. Keith, *The Veda of the Black Yajus School, entitled Taittiriya Sanhita.* Part 2. (HOS Vol. 19) Cambridge, Mass. 1914, p. 628.

[22]) The rite was probably connected with the symbolic union of earth and sun, "whence sprang fertility for the crops, and a powerful spell to promote human fertility." Keith, AitĀr. trsl., p. 79.

procedure.[23]) Diverse accounts of these rites in the Sūtras reveal local differences. Keith suggested that the whole ceremony might have been originally performed by two Āryans as a solemn ritual.[24])

A similar rite was executed during the *Aśvamedha* or the great Horse sacrifice.[25]) At an important moment, *viz.* after the slaughter of the horse, the Chief Queen *(mahiṣī*, lit. "she-buffalo") was led to the dead stallion chanting complainingly, "no one is leading me" *(na mā nayati kaś cana*, *i. e.* is not actually "taking" me), "the horse is asleep" *(sasasty aśvakaḥ*, *i. e.* is idle or inactive). The meaning of √*nī* is illustrated by TS. version adding "no one is covering me" *(na mā yabhati kaś cana*, TS. VII 4,19,2). Then she lay down beside the horse and under a cover inserted his member into her genitals.

The erotic terminology of the following passage is completely different from what we have learnt in the RV. The majority of erotic connotations applied to those terms are not to be met with elsewhere. The next few stanzas are carefully omitted in the European translations (Griffith, Keith etc.).[26])

The queen is spoken of as *ut-sakthī* "with outstretched thighs". The insertion of the horse's member (*añjiḥ* lit. "unctuous, sleek"), "which is the enjoyment of women" *(yaḥ strīṇāṃ jīvabhojanaḥ*, VS. XXIII 21) and "which is the rubber of their crevices" *(ya āsāṃ biladhāvanaḥ*, TS. VII 4,19; Kāṭh. 5, 4,8), is expressed by *saṃ-*√*cāray* to bring into contact or *parā-*√*vadh* to strike down.[27])

A colloquy between the officiating priests and the female participants, which took place simultaneously with the ritual copulation, consisted of coarse jokes full of vulgar sexual allusions of the sauciest sort. In fact, these ambivalent riddles have been deprecated as obscene and immoral even by Richard Schmidt.[28]) It must be left to the students of Sanskrit to judge for themselves from the text itself. Phrases like "to

[23]) All the versions of the liturgical manuals agree in mentioning a courtesan and a brāhman scholar practising chastity, who were the actors.
[24]) AitĀr. trsl., p. 79.
[25]) For a full treatment of the texts concerning the Aśvamedha see Shrikrishna Bhawe, *Die Yajus' des Aśvamedha*. (Bonner orient. Studien H. 25) Stuttgart 1939. Cf. also J. v. Negelein in WZKM 16 (1902), p. 63—70.
[26]) Moreover, the meanings given by MW seem to have been copied — sometimes rather inaccurately — from pw.
[27]) *priyaḥ strīṇām apīcyo ya āsāṃ kṛṣṇe lakṣmaṇi sardigṛdiṃ parāvadhīt*, Kāṭh. 5, 4,8 *(apīcyaḥ*, TS. VII 4,19).
[28]) Richard Schmidt, *Liebe und Ehe im alten und modernen Indien*. Berlin 1904, p. 31.

throw the penis *(pasaḥ* or *muṣṭiḥ* lit. "fist-like") into the 'slit' " *(gabhe* √*taṃs*, *ā-*√*han)* belong to the mildest expressions used there.

Whatever the origin of these "obscenities" (Keith) might have been,[29]) we cannot wave them away as a "barbarous ceremony" which had "nothing to do with Vedic religion" (Eggeling).[30]) It has to be admitted that we are too ready to issue pre- or non-Āryan certificates to all such phenomena that do not fit in with our preconceived ideas. At the same time, there is no need to go to the length of maintaining that everything in these rites has to be taken in the literal sense, but transferred from the crude earthly reality to the sublime transcendental existence.[31]) These ceremonies and rites are clearly reflections of ancient and deeply rooted, though not at all primitive, ideas of mysterious correspondences between the macrocosm and microcosm. We may note considerable differences in the texts dealing with them and it is possible that their real significance was long forgotten in the Brāhmaṇa period, as a practice of the dim past.

At any rate, the ritual intercourse of the Brāhmaṇa period was enacted covertly, *i. e.* to the exclusion of the public and with pronounced magic features, without providing any incentive to erotic stimulation or even excitement. According to ŚBr. IV 6,7,9 (and elsewhere), it was an offence even for a husband and wife to be seen while carrying on intercourse *(mithunaṃ* √*car)*. Once the literature of the Sūtras is explored in detail in view of these problems, it will be possible to ascertain whether and to what extent the Vedic schools were engaged in the studies of erotic implications of these rites. Until then, we cannot go beyond the assertion that the Vedic ritual as a whole implied avowed erotic associations linked with the ideas of fertility and procreative powers.

Some of the Brāhmaṇa explanations are directly related to sexual matters, in any case. As a matter of fact, the description of the sacrificial altar (p. 109). contains the oldest definition of the Indian ideal of classical feminine beauty.

[29]) For theories on their origin see A. B. Keith, TS. trsl., Part 2, p. CXXXV foll.
[30]) ŚBr. trsl., Vol. V., p. 322 note.
[31]) "...those who take part in sacrificial rites are no longer "themselves", but transformed, assuming for the time being the nature of the deities whose actions are imitated, and only at the conclusion of the ceremony becoming again "who they really are." Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *A Note on the Aśvamedha*. ArOr 8 (1936), p. 310.

4. Speculation

The teaching of the oldest Upaniṣads[32]) closely follows the explanations of the Brāhmaṇas. But the whole atmosphere has substantially changed and we are confronted with a new era which may be regarded as a transitional period between "prehistory" and the first historical stages in the development of ancient Indian erotics. We have to part definitely with the old Vedic notions and start a new chapter of sexual relations, much closer to the following stages than to the preceding period. Naturally, we cannot do that without a proper historical setting against the background of the newly emerging social and economic relations. This task, however, must be deferred to some future occasion, when a full treatment of these problems will be possible. Therefore, we may round off our present exposition of the oldest period of the Indian erotics with a brief survey of available data which are believed to present new aspects of further studies in this fascinating[33]) field.

We have to pass over social and family relations reflected in the emerging idea of the four *āśramas* or stages of life,[34]) as well as in numerous allusions to the worsening position of women within the new social structure.[35])

The place assigned to women in the family and in society is now determined predominantly by economic factors, and their sexual partnership is being slowly reduced to generative functions and to granting sexual enjoyment to man. Moral standards created by men are firmly establishing themselves[36]) and social life is encompassed by an increasing number of sexual taboos.[37])

Celibacy in students of the sacred knowledge is vigorously emphasized as a prerequisite to the attainment of higher spiritual goals (cf. ChUp.

[32]) The Āraṇyakas may be left out, as their theories either concur with the Brāhmaṇas, or were not fully developed until the age of the Sūtras.

[33]) "When we use the word *fascinate*, do we ever think of its real meaning — enchantment by the sight of the phallus?" Otto Kiefer, *Sexual Life in Ancient Rome*. London 1936, p. 171.

[34]) According to ChUp. II 23,1—2 these were in an embryonic form. See John W. Spellman, *Political Theory of Ancient India*. Oxford 1964, p. 100.

[35]) They are enumerated among the last items of property at various occasions; cf. ChUp. VII 24,2; VIII 2,9 etc. It seems, moreover, that the role played by learned women in the Upaniṣadic discussions (BṛĀrUp. IV 5,1 etc.) has been often largely exaggerated or misinterpreted.

[36]) *e. g.* the king Aśvapati Kaikeya maintains, among other things, that in his kingdom there is no adulterer, much less an adulteress *(na svairī svairiṇī kutaḥ*, ChUp. V 11,5).

[37]) Nakedness or unclothing was regarded as a tragedy next to killing in the Upaniṣadic period: "it is as if they kill him, as if they unclothe him" *(vicchādayanti*, ChUp. VIII 10,2).

VIII 4,3; 5,1-4). The pupils live with austerity *(tapaḥ)*, chastity *(brahmacaryam)* and faith *(śraddhā*, PraśnUp. 1,2). Sexual intercourse with the teacher's wife is condemned as the most heinous crime. He who dishonours his teacher's bed *(guros talpam āvasan)* is among those who fall *(patanti*, ChUp. V 10,9).

Nevertheless, economic interests often motivate the willingness of the Upaniṣadic teachers to impart their jealously guarded knowledge to an outsider (ChUp. IV 2,2 etc.). Even the famous Yājñavalkya, like his Ṛgvedic predecessors, takes part in the dispute of the well-known philosopher-king Janaka of Videha, with the aim of obtaining the thousand cows offered by the king to the wisest brāhman.[38]) The Upaniṣadic teachers themselves are no ascetics (and very often no brāhmans), but mostly householders who retired from the communal life, but retained their families, herds of cattle etc. Their doctrines are of scientific rather than religious character.

The oldest Upaniṣads share with the previous ritual texts the speculative tendency to discussions of the symbolism of the sacrificial procedures, which they relate to physiological processes. Sexual relations play a significant role in their speculative deliberations. Erotics has not been mentioned among the sciences and lores enumerated at ChUp. VII 1,2 (cf. ib. VII 2,1 etc.) but, as a matter of fact, the whole passage of BṛĀrUp. VI 4,1-28, dealing with the procreation ceremonies, reveals all the basic tenets of that period's erotic conceptions. These were taught (according to 4,4) by Uddālaka Āruṇi who mentions his predecessors, Nāka Maudgalya and Kumāra-hārita. It is interesting that the king Pravāhaṇa Jaivali, from whom Uddālaka (or Gautama) Āruṇi has learnt everything, proclaims that this knowledge *(vidyā)* was never before in the possession of a brāhman (ib. VI 2,8).[39])

The passage BṛĀrUp. VI 4,1 foll. was explained by the teacher to his pupil who was leaving his school to begin the life of a householder. He was told his duties, *viz*. how to raise a family in a proper way, how to beget a son etc.[40]) All these instructions were given in dead earnest and we can see that the authors of these doctrines laid great stress on the knowledge

[38]) "We just wish to have these cows," he says *(gokāmā eva vayaṃ sma iti*, BṛĀrUp. III 1,2). On another occasion he is asked by the king: "Yājñavalkya, for what purpose have you come, wishing for cattle or for hair-splitting questions?" *(yājñavalkya kim artham acārīḥ paśūn icchan aṇvantān iti)*, and he replies truthfully: "For both, O king" *(ubhayam eva samrāḍ iti hovāca*, ib. IV 1,2).

[39]) *iyaṃ vidyetaḥ pūrvaṃ na kasmiṃścana brāhmaṇa uvāsa.*

[40]) See Paul Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishad's des Veda*. Leipzig ³1921, p. 513.

of sexual mechanisms. Ritual ideas find full application in their instructions.

In the act of procreation, the woman *(strī)* is to be looked upon as a place of sacrifice. She must be approached "below" *(striyam adha upāsīta)*, par. 2). Her generative organ *(upasthaḥ)* is the sacrificial altar, her pubic hair *(lomāni)* the grass, her skin the soma-press. The two labia of the vulva *(muṣkau)* are the fire in the middle. He who practices sexual intercourse knowing this *(ya evaṃ vidvān adhopahāsaṃ carati)*, attains the same greatness as one who performs the great Vājapeya sacrifice (see Hillebrandt 141-3).

The whole sexual act is explained in terms of a ritual performance, so that every step is carefully described and, without its proper knowledge, many mortals *(maryāḥ)* who are brāhmans by birth leave this world impotent *(nirindriyāḥ)* and devoid of merit (par. 4). Every act during the coition should be accompanied by recitation of hymns felicitating the union.

Should the wife not grant the man his desire, he should buy her with presents *(avakrīṇīyāt)*. If she still refuses, he should beat her with a stick or with his hand and overcome her forcibly *(atikrāmet*, par. 7). In the course of the act, after inserting his member *(arthaṃ niṣṭhāya)* and joining mouth to mouth *(mukhena mukhaṃ saṃdhāya)*, he should caress her vulva *(upastham asyā abhimṛśya)* and recite another hymn.

Prescriptions follow in case he does not wish her to conceive (par. 10) and *vice versa* (par. 11), as well as an Atharvavedic spell and curses, if the woman *(jāyā)* has a lover *(jāraḥ*, par. 12).

The whole passage closes with the admonition not to wish to cohabit with the wife of one who is learned in the Veda (par. 12),[41]) and with rites accompanying the birth of a son (par. 13-28).

Thus the quality of offspring has been postulated in the Upaniṣads.

The theory of procreation was further elaborated in ChUp. II 13,1-2 which connects the fivefold division of the Vāmadevya chant *(sāman-)* with five steps in sexual intercourse. One invites the woman *(upamantrayate)*, asks her *(jñapayate)*, lies down with her *(striyā saha śete)*, lies on her *(prati strīṃ saha śete)*, fulfils his desire *(kālaṃ gacchati)* and finishes the intercourse *(pāraṃ gacchati)*. Thus he reaches the full award of the chant. The maxim *(vratam)* is that he should avoid no woman *(na kāñcana pariharet)*. The whole passage is a good example of schematized

[41]) *śrotriyasya dāreṇa nopahāsam icchet.*

classification which affected the sexual phenomena in some of the late Vedic schools.

The transfer of ritual procedures to human relations is one of the striking aspecs of the Upaniṣadic thought. Water is supported on sperm *(retaḥ)* and sperm is supported on the heart *(hṛdayam)*;[42]) semen is the essence *(rasaḥ)* of man *(puruṣaḥ*, BṛĀrUp. VI 4,1). Prajāpati created a woman *(strī)* in order to provide a firm support *(pratiṣṭhā*, also "abode") for man (ib. VI 4,2). If a sacrificer sees a woman in his dreams, he may infer the fulfilment of his objective (ChUp. V 2,7-8), *i. e.* the success of his sacrifice.

"The female organ of generation is the one goal of all kinds of enjoyment;"[43]) it is the seat of procreation *(prajātiḥ)*, immortality *(amṛtam*, also nectar, ambrosia) and bliss *(ānandaḥ*, TUp. III 10,3). Elsewhere the female genitals and "what can be enjoyed" are combined.[44]) "And when one laughs and eats and practises sexual intercourse, then it corresponds to the chant and recitation" (ChUp. III 17,3).[45])

Erotic terminology used in the oldest Upaniṣads is almost the same as that of the classical Sanskrit: *sam-pari-*√*ṣvaj* to embrace sexually (BṛĀrUp. I 4,3; IV 3,21); *saṃ-*√*bhū* to be united sexually, cohabit (mostly with acc., ib. I 4,4; TS. II 5,1,5; VII 5,9,4; ŚBr. I 7,4,1 etc.); *maithunaṃ* √*car* to practise sexual intercourse (ChUp. III 17,3); √*ram* to enjoy oneself sexually (with instr., ib. VIII 12,3); √*mud* (med.) in the same sense (BṛĀrUp. IV 3,13);[46]) *ratyā saṃ-*√*yuj* to join in sexual intercourse (PraśnUp. 1,13); *retaḥ* √*sic* to shed the sperm in (with loc., AitUp. II 1,1; MuṇḍUp. II 1,5), or rare phrases like *sparśā maithunāḥ* touches of love-making (KaṭhUp. II 1,3) etc.

The term *kāmaḥ* still means "desire" in the Upaniṣads, and it can be applied to a wife *(jāyā)* with offspring as well as to wealth *(vittam)* at the same time (BṛĀrUp. I 4,17; cf. PraśnUp. 1,4 etc.); *eṣaṇā* is used in the same sense (BṛĀrUp. III 5,1; cf. IV 4,22; III 9,11; IV 4,5), equally as √*iṣ* (ChUp. VII 3,1; 14,1). "The fools go after outward desires", *i. e.* pleasures *(parācaḥ kāmān anuyanti bālāḥ*, KaṭhUp. II 1,2). The term may be

[42]) *hṛdaye hy eva retaḥ pratiṣṭhitam bhavati*, BṛĀrUp. III 9,22.
[43]) *sarveṣām ānandānām upastha ekāyanam*, BṛĀrUp. II 4,11 = IV 5,12 (among a series of other terms schematically arranged).
[44]) *upasthaś cānandayitavyaṃ ca*, PraśnUp. 4,8.
[45]) *atha yad hasati yaj jakṣati yan maithunaṃ carati stutaśastrair eva tad eti.*
[46]) cf. ib. I 4,3 "he who is alone has no delight *(ekākī na ramate)*; *strībhiḥ saha modamānaḥ*, ŚBr. XIV 7,1,14 etc.

also used in a philosophical sense, like "a desire for the Self" *(ātmā*, BṛĀrUp. II 4,5). Finally, *kāmaḥ* may signify only sexual desire: „Indeed, whenever a pair come together, they fulfil each other's desire" *(yadā vai mithunau samāgacchata āpayato vai tāv anyo 'nyasya kāmam*, ChUp. I 1,6).

The choice of the female partner is no longer determined merely on account of the bare sexual drive: "by the mind one takes to a woman" *(manasā ... striyam abhihāryate*, BṛĀrUp. IV 1,6).

Finally, the supreme spiritual bliss is related to the ecstatic rapture experienced at the culmination of sexual union: "As a man when embraced by his dear wife knows nothing without or within, so the man embraced by the discerning Self knows nothing without or within" (BṛĀrUp. IV 3,21).[47]) A statement like this marks a new approach to the problems of sexual relations and unmistakably signalizes the beginning of a new era of ancient Indian erotics.

[47]) *tad yathā priyayā striyā samparişvakto na bāhyaṃ kiṃcana veda nāntaram evam evāyaṃ puruṣaḥ prājñenātmanā samparişvakto na bāhyaṃ kiṃcana veda nāntaram.*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	—	Ancient India. Journal of the Archaeological Department. Delhi.
AitĀr.	—	Aitareya Āraṇyaka.
AitBr.	—	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.
AitUp.	—	Aitareya Upaniṣad.
ALB	—	The Adyar Library Bulletin. Madras.
Am. Or. Soc.	—	The American Oriental Society.
AO	—	Acta Orientalia. Leiden.
ArOr	—	Archiv Orientální. Praha.
AV.	—	Atharvaveda Saṃhitā.
BB	—	Beiträge zur Kunde der indogermanischen Sprachen (Bezzenbergers Beiträge).
Bibl. véd.	—	Louis Renou, Bibliographie védique. Paris 1931.
BṛĀrUp.	—	Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad.
ChUp.	—	Chāndogya Upaniṣad.
DMG	—	Die Deutsche morgenländische Gesellschaft.
ERE	—	Hasting's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
Geldner I-III	—	Karl Friedrich Geldner, Der Rig-Veda. HOS 33, 34, 35. Cambridge, Mass. 1951.
GGA	—	Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen.
Grassmann	—	Hermann Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda. Leipzig 1936 (Neudruck).
HIL I	—	M. Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature. Vol. I. Calcutta 1927.
Hillebrandt	—	Alfred Hillebrandt, Ritual-Litteratur. Grundriss III. 2. Strassburg 1897.
HOS	—	Harvard Oriental Series. Cambridge, Mass.
IF	—	Indogermanische Forschungen.
IIJ	—	Indo-Iranian Journal.'s-Gravenhage.
JaimBr.	—	Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa.
JAOS	—	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
JRAS	—	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
Kāṭh.	—	Kāṭhaka.
KāṭhGṛ.	—	Kāṭhaka Gṛhya-sūtra.
KāṭhUp.	—	Kaṭha Upaniṣad.
KātyŚr.	—	Kātyāyana Śrauta-sūtra.
Kauś.	—	Kauśika-sūtra.
KauṣBr.	—	Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa.
Keith	—	Arthur Berriedale Keith, Rigveda Brahmanas. HOS 25. Cambridge, Mass. 1920.

Machek	—	Václav Machek, Etymologický slovník jazyka českého a slovenského. NČSAV Praha 1957.
MS.	—	Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā.
Mayrhofer	—	Manfred Mayrhofer, Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen. Heidelberg 1956 —
Meyer I-III	—	J. J. Meyer, Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation. Zürich-Leipzig 1937.
MuṇḍUp.	—	Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad.
MW	—	M. Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary.
Neisser	—	Walter Neisser, Zum Wörterbuch des Ṛgveda. Leipzig 1924. Abh. f. d. Kunde d. Morgenl. XVI. Nr. 4.
Oldenberg I-II	—	Hermann Oldenberg, Ṛgveda. Textkritische und exegetische Noten. Berlin, Vol. I. 1909, Vol. II. 1912.
OST I-V	—	John Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts. Vol. I.-V. London 1871-3.
PraśnUp.	—	Praśna Upaniṣad.
PW	—	Böhtlingk-Roth, Sanskrit-Wörterbuch. 7 Vols. St. Petersburg 1852/55-1875.
pw	—	O. Böhtlingk, Sanskrit-Wörterbuch in kürzerer Fassung. St. Petersburg 1879-1889.
Rau	—	Wilhelm Rau, Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien. Wiesbaden 1957.
RV.	—	Ṛgveda Saṃhitā.
ŚāṅkhŚr.	—	Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta-sūtra.
SBE	—	Sacred Books of the East.
ŚBr.	—	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
SV.	—	Sāmaveda Saṃhitā.
TāṇḍyaBr.	—	Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa.
TBr.	—	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa.
TS.	—	Taittirīya Saṃhitā.
TUp.	—	Taittirīya Upaniṣad.
Ved. Mythol.	—	A. A. Macdonell, Vedic Mythology. Strassburg 1897. Grundriss III. 1. A.
Ved. Stud. I-III	—	Richard Pischel-Karl F. Geldner, Vedische Studien. Stuttgart, Vol. I. 1889, Vol. II-III. 1897.
V. I.	—	A. A. Macdonell-A. B. Keith, Vedic Index of Names and Subjects. Vol. I.-II. Varanasi (Ind. repr.) 1958.
VS.	—	Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā.
Whitney I-II	—	William Dwight Whitney, Atharva-Veda Saṁhitā (trsl.). HOS 7, 8. Cambridge, Mass. 1905.
WZKM	—	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes.
ZDMG	—	Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft.
ZII	—	Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik.

INDICKÁ EROTIKA NEJSTARŠÍHO OBDOBÍ

Systematický průzkum nejstarších indických literárních památek přináší řadu cenných jazykových a kulturněhistorických poznatků, které nám pomáhají osvětlit dosud neprozkoumanou oblast intimních vztahů v životě staroindické společnosti. Jazykový rozbor textů ukazuje, že počátky erotiky jakožto samostatné vědní disciplíny je nutno hledat ve védských školách zabývajících se studiem souvztažností obětního rituálu a přírodních dějů, a možnostmi optimálního přizpůsobení životních potřeb kulturního člověka nepříznivému tropickému prostředí. Jedná se o první studii toho druhu v indologické literatuře vůbec.

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